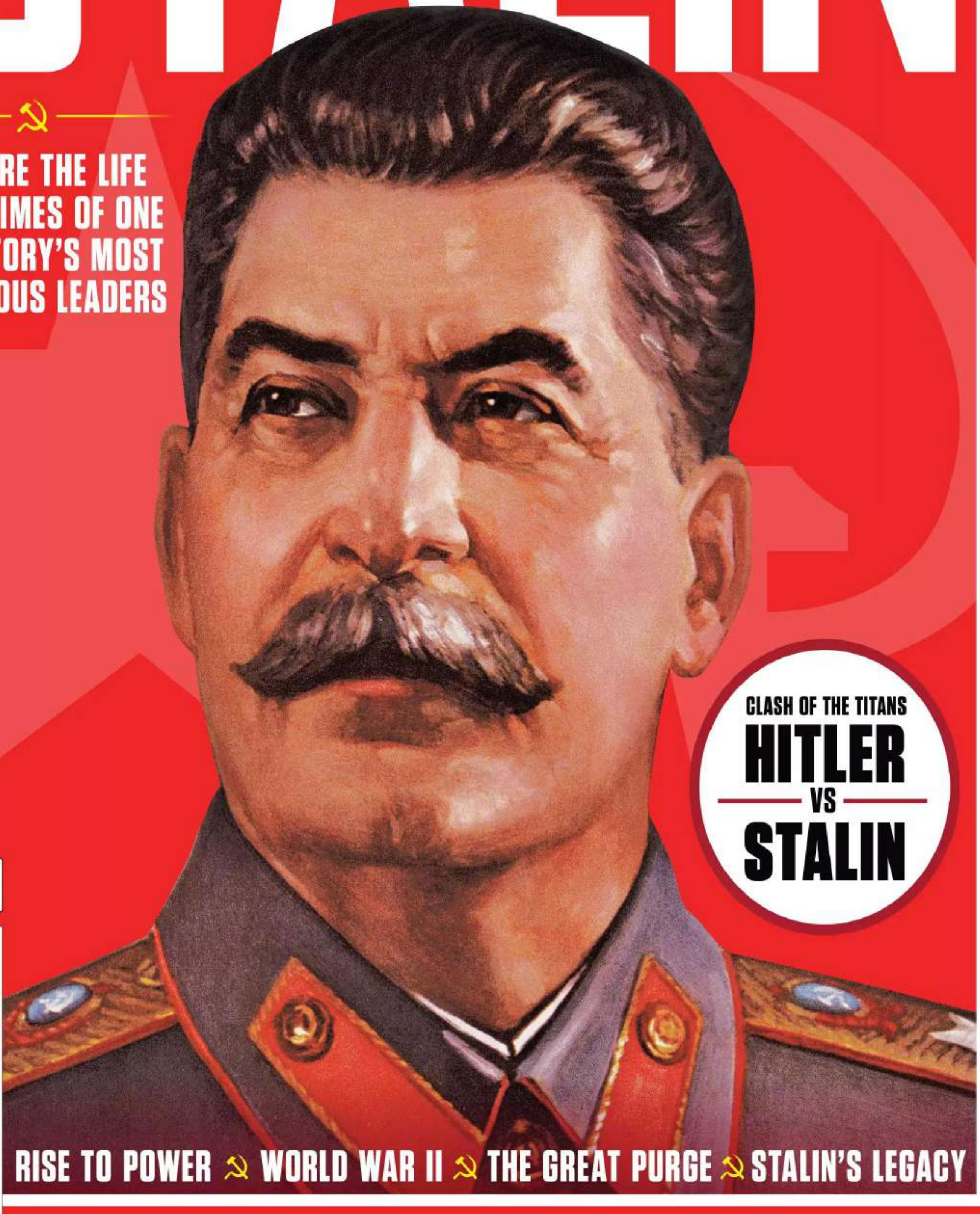
NEW

STALIN

EXPLORE THE LIFE AND CRIMES OF ONE OF HISTORY'S MOST NOTORIOUS LEADERS



CLASH OF THE TITANS

HITLER VS STALIN

RISE TO POWER ☭ WORLD WAR II ☭ THE GREAT PURGE ☭ STALIN'S LEGACY

FROM THE MAKERS OF ALL ABOUT HISTORY

Digital Edition

FUTURE

THIRD EDITION

WELCOME TO

THE BOOK OF STALIN

His is a name that strikes fear into the hearts of millions of people around the world, whose lives are still affected by his legacy. Stalin – a pseudonym which roughly translates as 'man of steel' – may loom large over world history, but he began life as a simple peasant boy in rural Georgia. In this book, we'll explore what drove the young Iosif Dzhugashvili from a career in the clergy into a life of crime, before finding his true calling in the underground Bolshevik movement. Find out how his years spent in Siberian exile shaped his entire world view and path to the top, before watching Stalin eliminate all his enemies (by any means necessary) to become the ruler of the USSR. See how his dictatorship progresses from the victories of World War II to the paranoia of the Cold War, and learn about the people who fell victim to his obsession with power.

FUTURE

THE BOOK OF
STALIN

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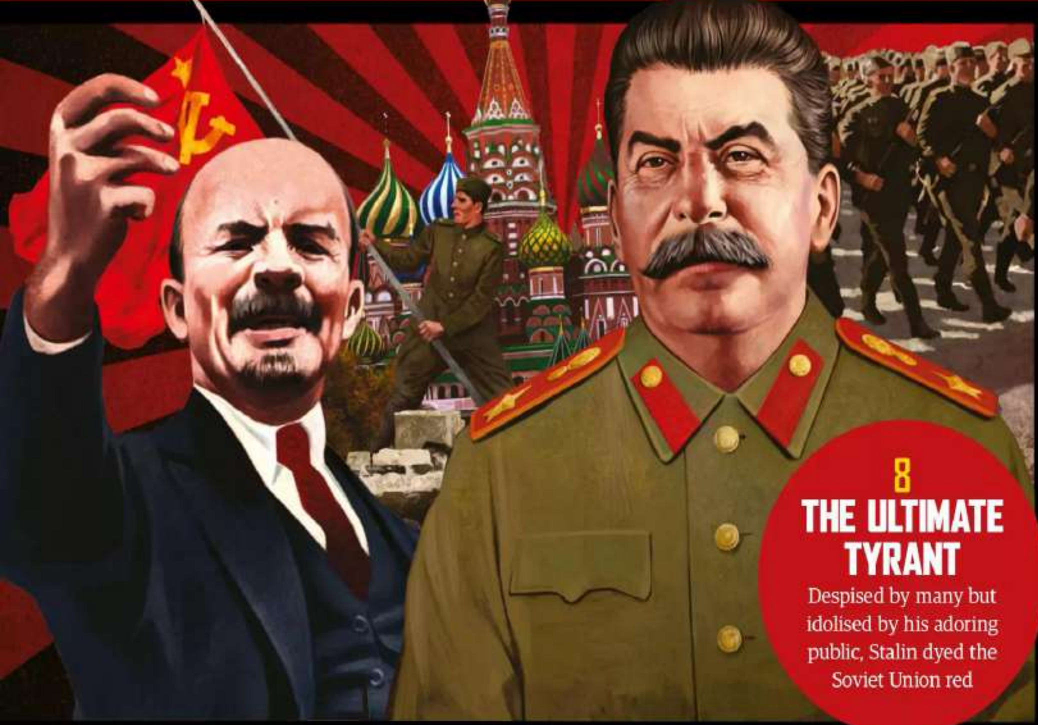

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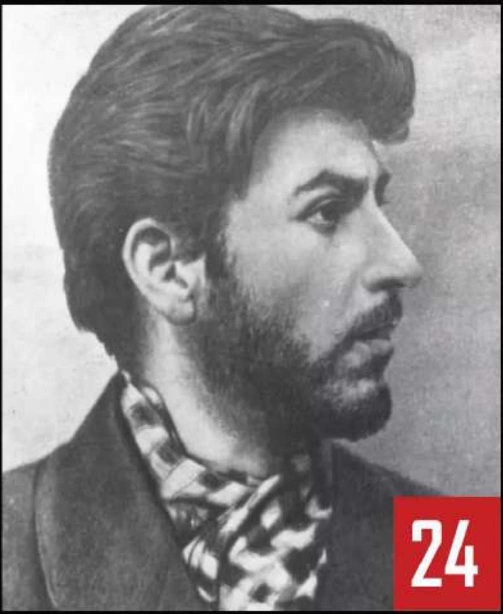

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RUSSIA'S ULTIMATE TYRANT

STALIN

WORDS: FRANCES WHITE

Despised by many but idolised by his adoring public, Stalin dyed the Soviet Union red with one of the most brutal and bloody regimes in history

Born the son of a poor cobbler in an illiterate family, Iosif Dzhugashvili seemed an unlikely person to one day become the dictator of the juggernaut that was the Soviet Union. Young Iosif had been born at a time of massive change. In his lifetime, the Tsars, which had ruled Russia for countless generations, would be thrown off the throne, giving this poor boy from Georgia the chance to claim ultimate power.

Stalin himself played little part in the famous revolution of October 1917, and it wasn't until the Russian Civil War of 1917 to 1921 that his commitment and organisation skills caught Lenin's attention and catapulted him through the ranks. After acquiring a taste of power, Stalin wanted more and so aligned himself with the ailing Soviet leader. As Lenin's imminent death loomed, Stalin, who was now general secretary, used his tenacity and cunning to ensure everything was in place for his rapid rise to power. His opposition were ejected from the party, the Soviet Union and eventually lost their lives. Obsessed with ensuring his rule remained unquestioned, Stalin purged the land of anyone who dared question his authority. Soon all who remained were the few who were fiercely loyal, and the many who were terrified into obedience. Stalin's ruthlessness had won him the ultimate prize – the Soviet Union was his.

RISE TO POWER

Three key reasons for the rise of the man of steel

1 Links with Lenin

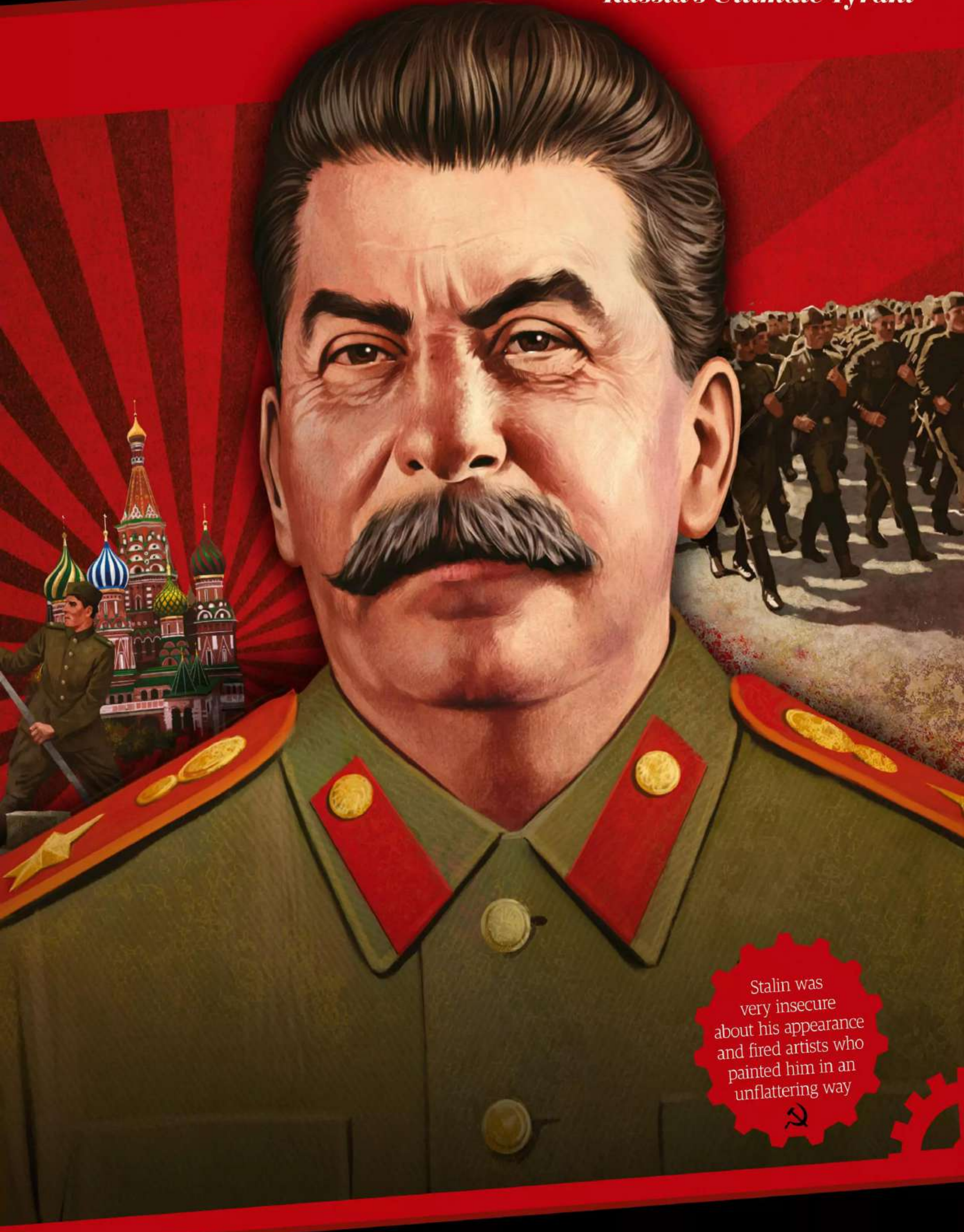
When Lenin went into semi-retirement, Stalin acted as his intermediary with the outside world, with unprecedented access to the ailing leader. Stalin used this to his advantage after his death, elevating Lenin to a godlike figure and he as his loyal disciple.

2 Political alliances

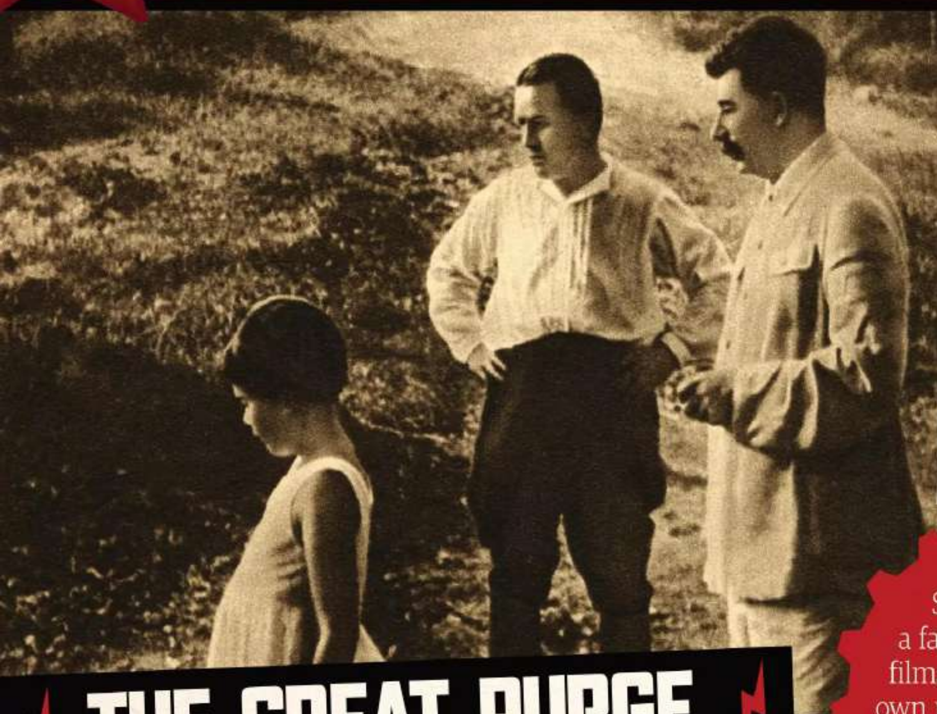
Stalin was able to set up an alliance with key figures in the Communist Party and replace enemies. Because of this Lenin's Testament, a document written by Lenin that called for Stalin's dismissal, was prevented from being revealed.

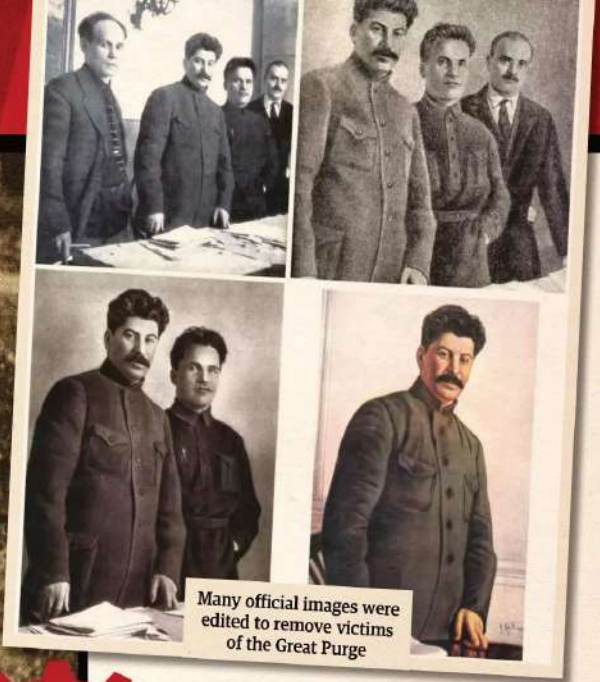
3 Reign of terror

Stalin was able to isolate and eject any members of the party who did not agree with him. This later turned into a regime of executions and the resulting atmosphere of fear ensured his authority would not be questioned.



Stalin was very insecure about his appearance and fired artists who painted him in an unflattering way





Many official images were edited to remove victims of the Great Purge

THE GREAT PURGE

It is a cold winter's night in 1937. A black van screeches to a halt on a dark and silent street. A small group of men emerge from the car, their sloping rimmed hats silhouetted against the dim light of the flickering streetlamps; their heavy guns swinging at their sides. One casually flicks open a notebook as another lights his pipe and takes a long drag. With a word and gesture to a nearby house the group move as one. The ground crunches under the thick soles of their leather boots as they climb the steps and knock sharply on the door.

They pound their fists against the cracking wood. One flicks open the letterbox and screams harsh words through the small gap and eventually the door opens and a pale face appears. One of the men kicks the door open and the group storm through the house, flinging open doors and destroying anything in their path. A moment later they emerge into the street again, dragging with them a terrified young man who clings to his father. The older man's face is pale but stern, his jaw clenched. His silence is louder than his son's panicked pleas and cries.

The men continue their raid, storming through houses until eventually the entire street is full of men from 17 to 70, some dazed, others hysterical and some with that same strange haunting silence. As the guards point their guns and usher them into the van there is no word of explanation and the few who protest are beaten. As the door closes and the vehicle disappears into the night, those who remain return silently to their homes.

These were not the first victims of the terror that would come to be known as the Great Purge, and they would not be the last. These armed raids in the dead of night were not the work of a secret terrorist organisation, but the government itself, and there was no redemption or tearful reunion awaiting these victims, but only imprisonment, torture, forced confessions and execution.

Obtaining ultimate power was not enough for Stalin. Controlled by his incredible paranoia, suddenly everyone became a suspect in conspiring to overthrow his rule. The purge began when Sergey Kirov, a staunch Stalinist, was murdered in 1934. Stalin used his assassination as evidence that there was a plot against him and launched the operation. But it is thought by some that Stalin himself arranged the death of the well-liked politician whose popularity threatened his rule. This began the string of witch-hunts that went on to claim millions of innocent lives.

The purges first struck former senior Communist Party leaders in the famous Moscow Trials. These trials were covered by the Western media, who saw no problem with the guilty verdicts as the accused admitted to their crime of conspiring to assassinate Stalin. However, behind closed doors confessions were being beaten out of the accused with mental and physical torture, repeated threats against their families and assurances that their lives would be spared if they only pleaded guilty. They were not.

Stalin was a fan of cowboy films and had his own private cinema where he hosted screenings

The purge then extended to the army, writers, artists, 'wealthy' farmers and eventually anyone who could be rounded up to make up the numbers of the 'minimum arrests' needed by the NKVD, the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs. Headed by Nikolai Yezhov, the NKVD troika were vicious courts of three people who would issue sentences without a full trial. Through this they could achieve assembly line-style executions of up to a thousand people per day. Eventually the purge extended to the Communist Party itself, as almost all the Bolsheviks who had taken part in the 1917 Revolution were destroyed, until the only original member who remained was Stalin.

From 1937 to 1938 some 1.2 million people met their death as a result of the purge. After his death, 357 lists were found bearing Stalin's own signature, authorising the executions of some 40,000 people. His calculated and cold approach to the millions of lives he destroyed so easily is starkly evident in a line he reportedly muttered while reviewing one such list; "Who's going to remember all this riff-raff in ten or 20 years' time? No one. Who remembers the names now of the boyars Ivan the Terrible got rid of? No one."

MOST WANTED

Three senior officials who found themselves on Stalin's hit list

Leon Trotsky

Position: Head of the Fourth International
Crime: Firmly opposed to Stalin as the leader of the Soviet Union
Fate: Assassinated on Stalin's orders on 21 August 1940

Nikolai Yezhov

Position: Head of the NKVD
Crime: Theft of government funds, homosexuality, collaboration with German spies
Fate: Arrested & shot on 4 February 1940

Nikolai Bukharin

Position: General secretary of Comintern's executive committee
Crime: Conspiracy to overthrow the state
Fate: Arrested and executed on 15 March 1938

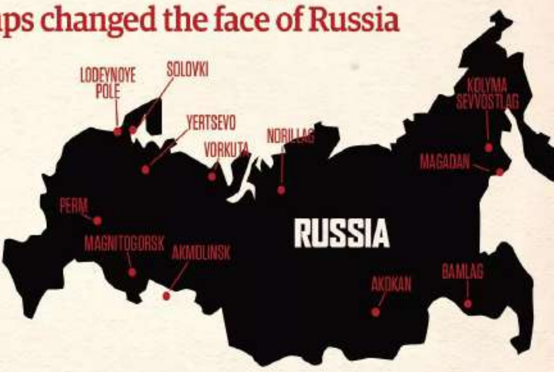
	LENIN	STALIN
COMMUNISM	Lenin's vision was a society run by the people for the people, with all resources shared equally. He wished to completely eradicate the idea of bourgeoisie (a social order ruled by the wealthy) and believed the power of the state would eventually fade away.	He used communism to further his own power and believed Russia would thrive with a powerful leader controlling the masses. He wished to eliminate the bourgeoisie, as well as any resistance of the working class, using state violence to do so.
FOREIGN POLICY	National borders were deemed outdated and Lenin believed the world should engage in a unified revolution. He wished to spread communism across the planet and envisioned a merger of all nations and the creation of a world state.	An advocate of 'socialism in one country', Stalin believed the Soviet Union should focus on building communism in Soviet-controlled countries rather than encouraging a worldwide revolution that would be more difficult to control.
ECONOMY	The New Economic Policy of 1921 allowed private individuals to own their own enterprises. This meant peasants could operate freely, keeping and trading their own produce. The idea of this was to encourage an independent economy.	He wished to rapidly industrialise the economy and brought all agriculture under government control. Peasants were forced to live on group farms and there was seizure of grain hoards, land, machinery and livestock.
THE PEOPLE	Lenin believed that all the oppressed people of the world had the right to self-determination, to rule themselves rather than submit to the will of the state. However, Lenin was also responsible for the Red Terror, where he ordered the executions of a host of his opponents.	There were mass purges of anyone who dared to question Stalin's authority or engage in revolutionary behaviour. Stalin believed that political repression of the people was necessary to defend against the destruction of the Soviet Union.

GULAGS

From the empty frozen plains of Siberia to the towering concrete of central cities, the brutal Gulag camps changed the face of Russia

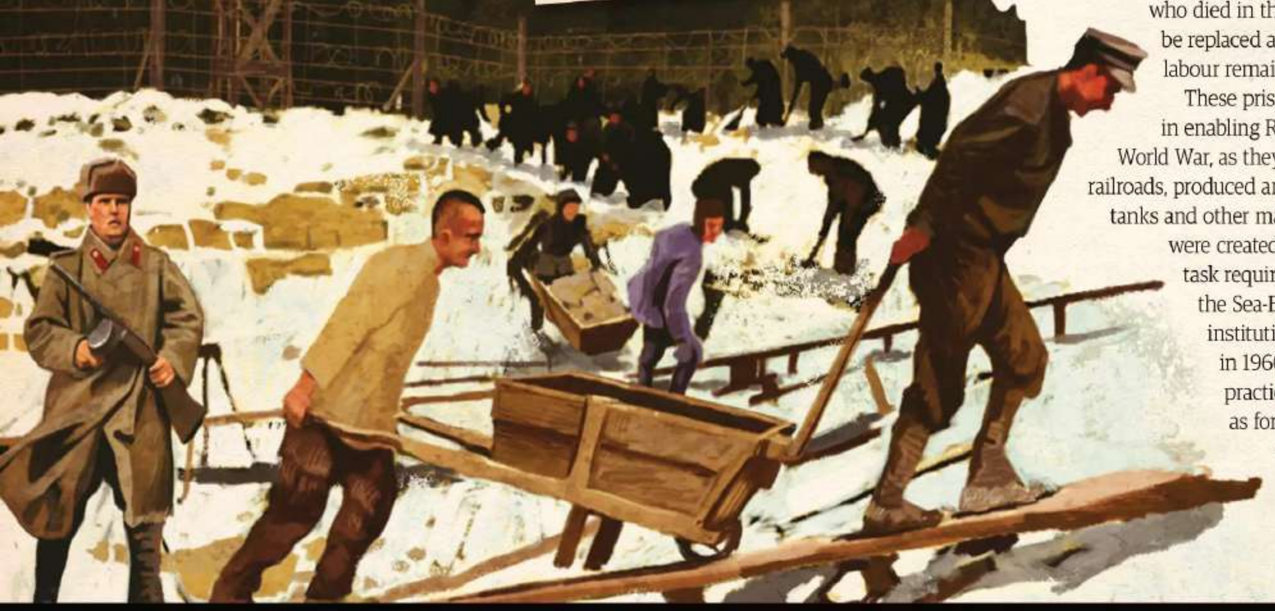
When the term 'Gulag' was coined, it was used to refer to a government agency in charge of the forced labour camps. But to many today the word Gulag is representative of the entire Soviet system of repression, unwarranted arrests, tortuous interrogations, disregard for human rights and millions of needless deaths.

The Gulag camps existed in a form before Stalin, though they did not bear that name. Known as 'corrective labour camps', the first was installed in 1918, but these early labour camps were very different to the ones Stalin would create. He transformed these camps, where the prisoners enjoyed relative freedom, into a widespread system of over 53 separate merciless camps and 423 labour colonies all across the Soviet Union from the 1930s to '50s. These camps would come to imprison 14 million people and claim the lives of at least 1.6 million of these unfortunates. The vast majority of the camps were in extremely remote, inhospitable regions of northeast Siberia. One of the locations for these camps, Kolyma, struck fear into the hearts of all Gulag prisoners. With a yearlong winter, Kolyma was an unforgiving, barren place, impossible to reach overland. And the camps there, like many other Siberian camps, did not bother with fences or fortification; to seek escape in the vast freezing plains was to sentence oneself to death. The Gulag camps were not like the infamous Nazi concentration camps, which were designed to kill their prisoners, but the horrific conditions often resulted in the same outcome. The Gulags were more numerous, housed more prisoners and lasted for many more years than the brutal Nazi camps.



The prisoners, of whom a great majority had been imprisoned without trial, would face relentless years of hard labour and minimal food. The more work they completed, the larger their ration of thin, tasteless soup, but as they were supplied with primitive, broken and useless tools, achieving the high labour expectations was nearly impossible. With depleting food rations, and sometimes given only four hours' rest a day, the Gulag prisoners were worked to exhaustion and death. In the winter of 1941 alone, a quarter of the Gulags' population died of starvation. To Stalin the Gulags were essential. His purges were so fervent that any prisoner who died in the camps could instantly be replaced and the supply of cheap labour remained uninterrupted.

These prisoners played a key role in enabling Russia to win the Second World War, as they constructed essential railroads, produced ammunition and built tanks and other machines. New camps were created wherever an economic task required cheap labour, such as the Sea-Baltic Canal. The Gulag institution was finally closed in 1960, but many of the practices of these camps, such as forced labour and prisoner intimidation, continue to exist in Russian prisons to this day.



Stalin was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize twice - in 1945 and again in 1948

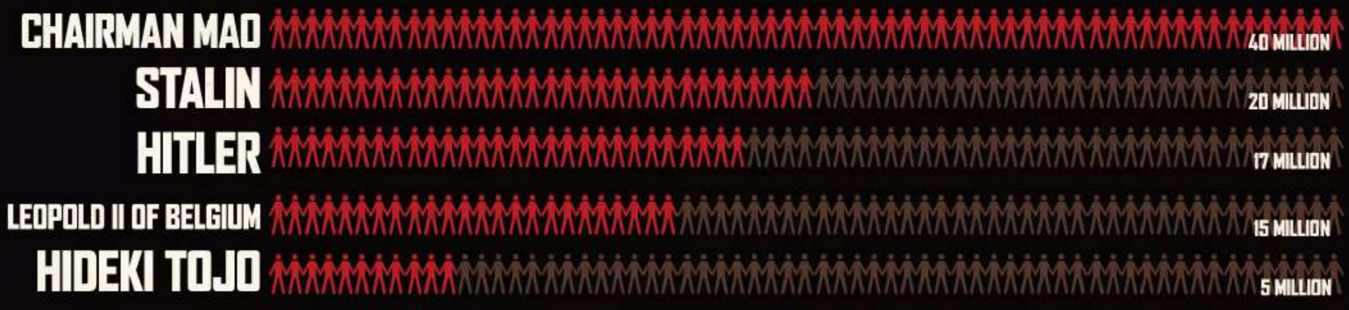
CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Stalin's Russia wasn't the place to be caught - or even accused of - committing a crime

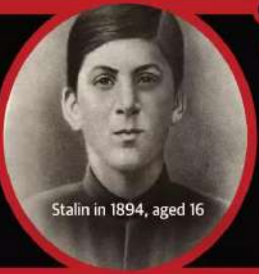
Late to work three times	The punishment for repeated offences of tardiness was to be sent to the Gulag for three years. There the offenders would face up to 14 hours a day of hard physical labour.
Telling a joke about a government official	You could face a punishment of up to 25 years in a Gulag camp for this crime. Ivan Burylov wrote the word 'Comedy' on his 'secret' ballot paper and was sentenced to eight years.
Petty theft	The sentence for stealing state property, usually food, was ten years of hard labour in a Gulag. This would often be extended without explanation and the convicts forced to live in exile once released.
Conspiracy to prepare uprising	Those accused of political crimes usually became victims of the purge and were executed. Close friends and family members would also be hunted out and disposed of.
Working in Germany	Many citizens of the Baltic States were forced to work in Germany during WWII. They were later arrested for this 'crime' and were sentenced to ten years of forced labour in a Gulag camp.
Practising Christianity	In the late-1920s there was a mass purge of Christian intellectuals and closure of churches. Anyone found practising the religion was arrested, sent to Gulag camps or executed.

THE WORST DICTATOR?

Find out the estimated number of deaths that history's worst dictators are thought to have caused



The cobbler's son
Stalin is born as Iosif Dzhugashvili. He suffers from the smallpox disease, which permanently scars his face, and aged 12 his left arm is injured in an accident, leaving it shorter than the other. **18 December 1878**


Stalin in 1894, aged 16

Life in the priesthood
Stalin attends Tiflis Spiritual Seminary after receiving a scholarship. During his training to join the priesthood he discovers the ideas of Marx and Engels and is inspired. He is expelled after missing his final exams. **1894-1899**

Political life begins
Stalin learns that Lenin has formed the Bolsheviks, a political group that follows the teachings of Marx. He signs up and proves himself a skilled and capable organiser. He is arrested and exiled to Siberia but quickly escapes. **1903**

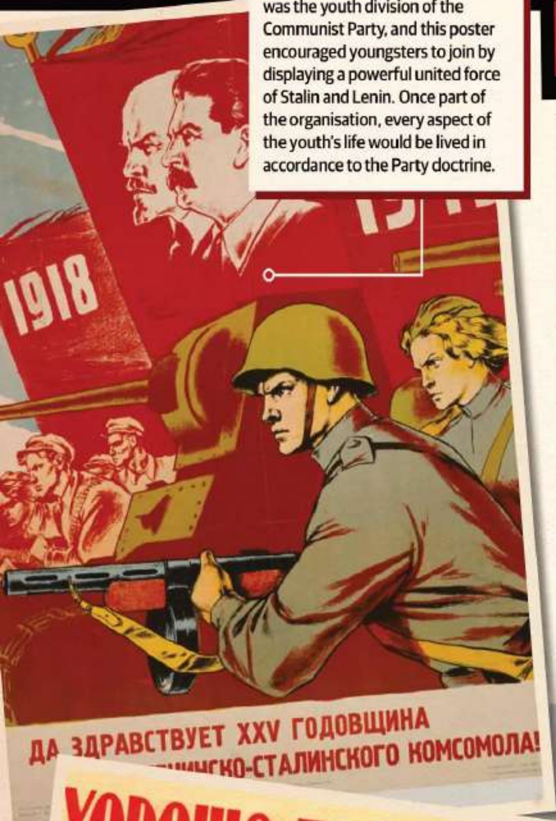
A taste of power
As the Bolsheviks seize power, Stalin rises through the ranks and is appointed the People's Commissar for Nationality Affairs. This position gives him his first taste of real power, and he uses it to burn villages and order executions. **1917**

The steady rise
Lenin appoints Stalin as General Secretary. That year Lenin suffers from a stroke and his relationship with Stalin deteriorates. He insists that Stalin be removed from his position, but Stalin's strong link of allies prevents this. **1922**

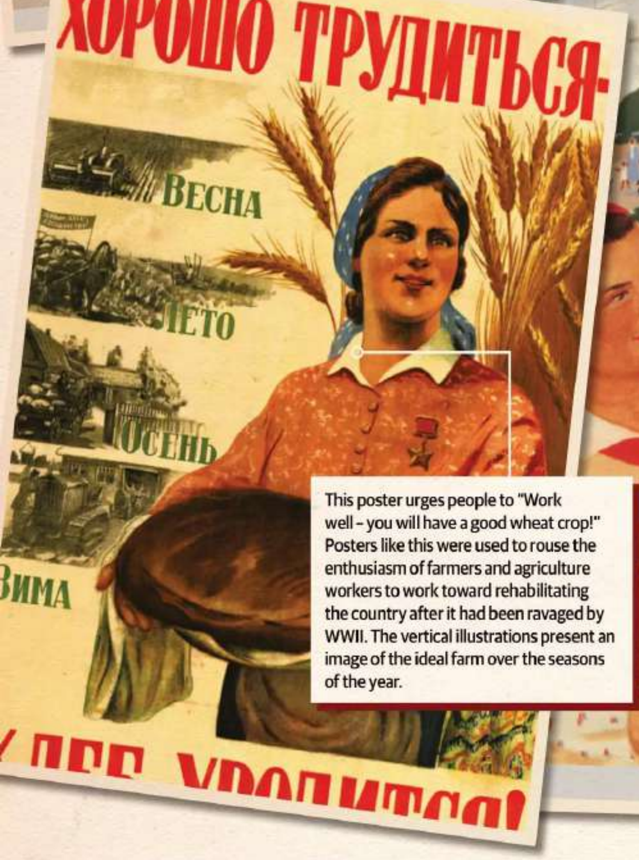
POWERFUL PROPAGANDA

Russia's 'man of steel' was a master at the art of propaganda, depicting and presenting himself as the hero of the nation

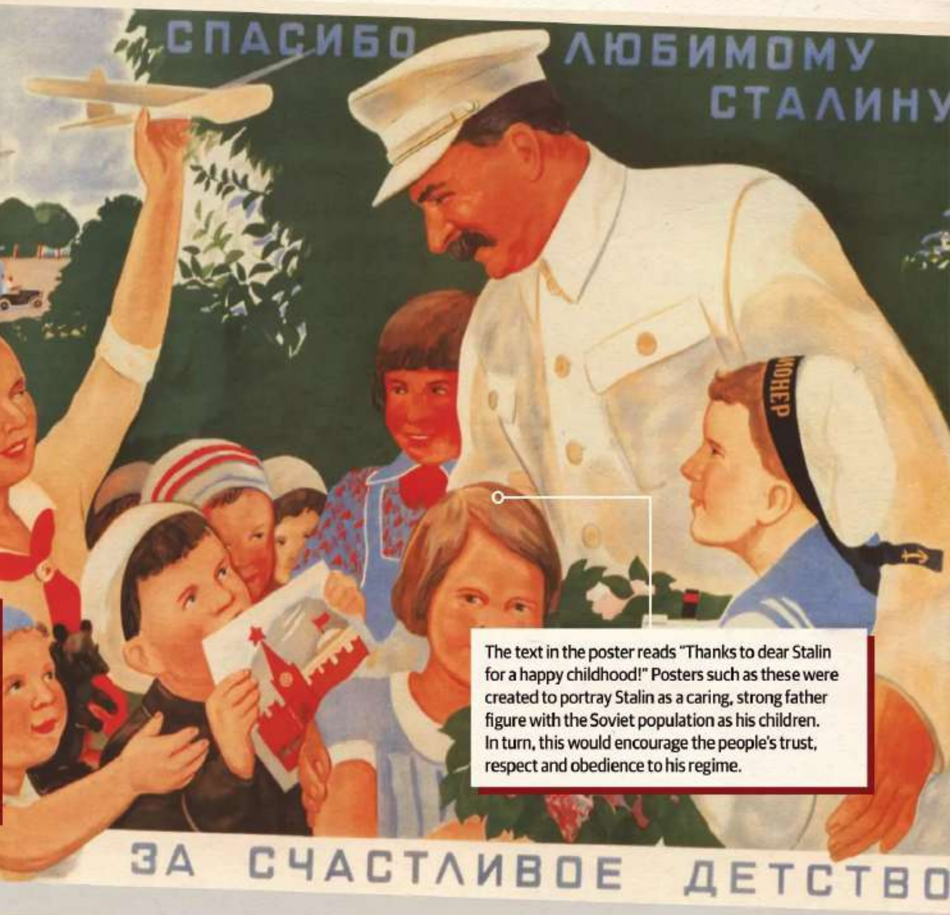
When Stalin turned 50 in December of 1929, a lavish celebration presented to the Russian people a messianic figure, the brother in arms of the adored Lenin and his humble disciple. This marked the beginning of the cult of personality surrounding Stalin that would follow him until his death and even beyond. Through the use of propaganda, Russian history was rewritten. Stalin, not Trotsky, had served as Lenin's second in command during the October Revolution and he grew not only spiritually but physically too as his modest 162-centimetre (five-foot, four-inch) frame transformed to over 183 centimetres (six feet) in the towering statues built in his image. Stalin wasn't a cruel or vicious tyrant; he was a loving and strong father figure. The phrase "Thank you, dear comrade Stalin, for a happy childhood!" appeared all over schools and nurseries, with children chanting the slogan over and over again at festivals. The title 'Father' was stolen from the priests he eliminated from his land and associated firmly with Stalin alone. And it was this 'Father Stalin' who the people adored, trusted and venerated, as the real man secretly orchestrated the deaths of millions of their families and friends.



The text reads "Long live the 25th anniversary of the Leninist-Stalinist Komsomol." The Komsomol was the youth division of the Communist Party, and this poster encouraged youngsters to join by displaying a powerful united force of Stalin and Lenin. Once part of the organisation, every aspect of the youth's life would be lived in accordance to the Party doctrine.



This poster urges people to "Work well – you will have a good wheat crop!" Posters like this were used to rouse the enthusiasm of farmers and agriculture workers to work toward rehabilitating the country after it had been ravaged by WWII. The vertical illustrations present an image of the ideal farm over the seasons of the year.



The text in the poster reads "Thanks to dear Stalin for a happy childhood!" Posters such as these were created to portray Stalin as a caring, strong father figure with the Soviet population as his children. In turn, this would encourage the people's trust, respect and obedience to his regime.

© Alamy

The dictator
Lenin dies and a vicious and hurried struggle for power ensues between the leading government figures. Stalin manages to eject his rivals, such as Trotsky, from the Soviet Union, placing himself at the top of the pyramid. **1924-1927**

Five-year plan
Stalin begins the first of his 'five-year plans', with seizure of farms and factories. The result is mass famine, claiming the lives of millions. Export levels are maintained, with food shipped out as people starve. **1928-1933**

The red terror
Stalin begins a campaign of political repression known as the Great Purge. 20 million Russians are sent to Gulag camps and a third of the members of the Communist Party are executed on suspicion of disloyalty. **1934-1940**

Stalin met with Churchill and Roosevelt at the Yalta Conference

War leader
After Adolf Hitler breaks the non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, Stalin's Red Army joins forces with the Allies in WWII. Victory eventually comes to the Soviet Union, but at the cost of millions of lives. **1941-1945**

Death of a dictator
Stalin suffers from a stroke and isn't found for several hours; his guards fear disturbing him. He remains bedridden for several days before dying on 5 March 1953; rumours that he was poisoned persist through the media. **5 March 1953**

WORLD WAR II

In the carnage of WWII, Stalin aligned his country with the 'decadent' West to defeat Hitler's Nazis

By the late-1930s Stalin had found himself with very few international friends due to his extreme policies. After his attempts to sign an anti-German military alliance with Britain and France failed he was forced to ally with the last country he'd ever imagine - Nazi Germany. The Soviet Union entered into a non-aggression pact on 23 August 1939. This was exactly what Hitler needed to eliminate his fear of a war on two fronts and eight days later Germany invaded Poland and the world was catapulted into war.

Although it was obvious to Stalin that the pact was only there to delay an inevitable conflict between the two powers, when Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, the Soviet leader was in shock. He had ignored the warnings of Churchill, shot German deserters who had warned him of the coming attack and even supplied Germany with supplies right up until that day. Stalin retreated to his dacha for three days, ignoring telephone calls and refusing to see anyone. He was facing the brutal reality of his own actions - a weakened military of which his own purge had eliminated 40,000 men with a host of key, talented advisors. But when he emerged it was as exactly the leader Russia needed. In the face of war, only the 'man of steel' possessed the strength required to unite his people.

Unite them he did. As Hitler's army drove its way into the Soviet Union, Stalin's forces fought to push them back over four long and bloody years. Offensives such as the Battle of Stalingrad and the Battle of Kursk tested the Soviet leader's resolve as his cities ran red with the blood of millions of soldiers and civilians. The hard-fought victory finally came, but Stalin's gaze was now focused on achieving Soviet dominance over Eastern and Central Europe, and soon a very different, colder war would begin.

> A scientist was ordered by Stalin to create a human-ape hybrid known as a humanzee, when he failed he was arrested and exiled

The non-aggression pact was named the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, after the Soviet and Nazi ministers of the same names

EXPERT OPINION

What kind of military leader was Russia's ultimate tyrant?

Geoffrey Roberts

Professor Geoffrey Roberts is Head of the School of History at UCC. His books include *Stalin's Wars: From World War To Cold War, 1939-1953* and *Stalin's General: The Life Of Georgy Zhukov*, which was the winner of the Society for Military History Distinguished Book Award for Biography.

How involved a war leader was Stalin?

Stalin was involved in every aspect of the Soviet war effort - military, political, economic and diplomatic. He worked 16 hours a day and signed thousands of decrees and orders. Everyone who had dealings with him during the war was amazed by his knowledge of the technical details of the modern war machine. As Supreme Commander he was centrally involved in devising military strategy and directing large-scale operations. He was the indispensable figure of the Soviet high command.

Was Stalin a tactically astute leader?

Politically and diplomatically Stalin was highly astute. That is apparent from the close personal connections he forged with Churchill and Roosevelt during the war and the influence he exercised within the Allied grand alliance. [Regarding the military] Stalin was stronger on strategy than tactics and he made some bad mistakes during the first few months of the war. But he learnt from his mistakes and to take more notice of professional military advice.

Stalin's finest hour was in November 1941 when he decided to stay in Moscow when the Germans were at the gates of the Soviet capital. Stalin's presence in Moscow and some inspiring patriotic speeches he gave helped to steady Soviet nerves and defences, and bought time for the preparation of a massive counter-offensive in December 1941 that drove the Germans away from the city.

There are many great victories to choose from but the Battle of Stalingrad stands out. Summer 1942 was another moment of crisis for the Soviet Union when a German thrust south threatened the security of Soviet oil supplies. Stalingrad, which barred the way to the German advance, almost fell to them, but the Red Army staged a heroic defence and managed to hang on to a bridgehead in the city. Once again, Stalin and his generals held their nerve and carefully prepared a counter-stroke that encircled the Germans in Stalingrad and forced them to surrender. Stalingrad was a defeat from which the Germans never really recovered.

What was his greatest failure?

It is often said that Stalin's greatest failure was that he did not anticipate the German invasion of Russia in June 1941. I think the failure was more one of strategic imagination and preparation. Stalin and his generals underestimated the power of the German attack and overestimated the strength of Soviet defences and their capacity to counter-attack. Stalin knew the Germans were going to attack, if not precisely when, but he was confident he and the Red Army could deal with all contingencies, including a surprise attack. In a sense he was right - the Soviet Union was able to survive the German invasion, but the cost was enormous and almost catastrophic. By the end of 1941 the Germans had reached Moscow, surrounded Leningrad and penetrated deep into the southern USSR. Perhaps the most grievous loss was Kiev, the Ukrainian capital, which fell to the Germans in September 1941. Stalin personally refused to allow the withdrawal of the Red Army from the Kiev area, with the result that several hundred thousand troops were encircled and captured by their German enemies.

Do you think the massive casualties of the Soviet army affected Stalin?

Stalin was a person of great feeling but little human empathy. He could be a very emotional person, subject to violent mood swings, and often displayed great sentimentality as well as anger. He was also an ideologue and an intellectual who thought in terms of grand designs and abstractions and spent much of his life engrossed in the written word and in political contexts that were sheltered from the brutal realities of war. These latter qualities helped inoculate Stalin from the sufferings of his troops. Stalin was utopian and an idealist who believed that the ends justified the means, and he had the emotional make-up that enabled taking and living with numerous extremely harsh decisions.

How much did Stalin's leadership contribute to the ultimate victory?

I have made myself unpopular with people who see only evil in Stalin by arguing that the Soviet dictator was the one essential Allied leader during the Second World War. Without his leadership the Soviet Union would in all probability have lost the war with Nazi Germany. The Soviet system that confronted Hitler's regime was Stalin's system, the system he had created in the 1920s and '30s. If Stalin hadn't performed well during the war the system would have collapsed in the face of the devastating blows it received. There was no substitute Soviet leader.

How would you sum up Stalin's leadership style during WWII?

Energetic, authoritative, calculating, controlled and ruthless. He made a lot of mistakes but was more right than wrong after the first few disastrous months of the war. He was a learning war leader. In relation to his generals, he reinvented himself as a team player, as a combination of chairman and managing director. He imposed a harsh disciplinary regime on the Red Army and the whole country and had no compunction in destroying those he saw as his enemies. Stalin was a great warlord, but he was also a ruthless and brutal one. He did great harm to millions of innocent people as well as serving humanity well in defeating Hitler and the Nazis. It is that combination of good and evil that makes Stalin the most paradoxical as well as the most important dictator of the 20th century.

STALIN'S DIPLOMACY

How the Soviet leader tried to control and manage the only men who could rival him for power

Adolf Hitler

The Father and the Führer

As a fascist and a communist, Hitler and Stalin couldn't be further apart politically. Hitler's frequent condemnation of the Soviet Union and claims that Slavic people were inferior did little to help relations. However, it became in both of their interests to ally with each other. Of course, this façade of friendship did not last long, as Hitler invaded Soviet territory and the anticipated war broke out. The two dictators shared a certain respect for the other's power though, and Hitler is quoted as saying, "Stalin is one of the most extraordinary figures in world history. He began as a small clerk and he has never stopped being a clerk. Stalin owes nothing to rhetoric. He governs from his office, thanks to a bureaucracy that obeys his every nod and gesture."

Winston Churchill

Putting up the Iron Curtain

The relationship between these two great leaders started off on rocky ground – Churchill's hatred of communism was well known, and Stalin was suspicious of the Western powers who he believed had abandoned his Red Army. But in order to beat the German invasion, they had to assume a united front. Churchill was satisfied that his charm and personality had won the dictator over, but Stalin had secretly installed a network of spies in London and could plan his own perfect 'performance' when dealing with the British leader. Although photos and film footage show the two men seemingly free of past misgivings, in reality Stalin would always be the one nut Churchill was unable to crack.

Franklin D Roosevelt

Looking after Uncle Joe

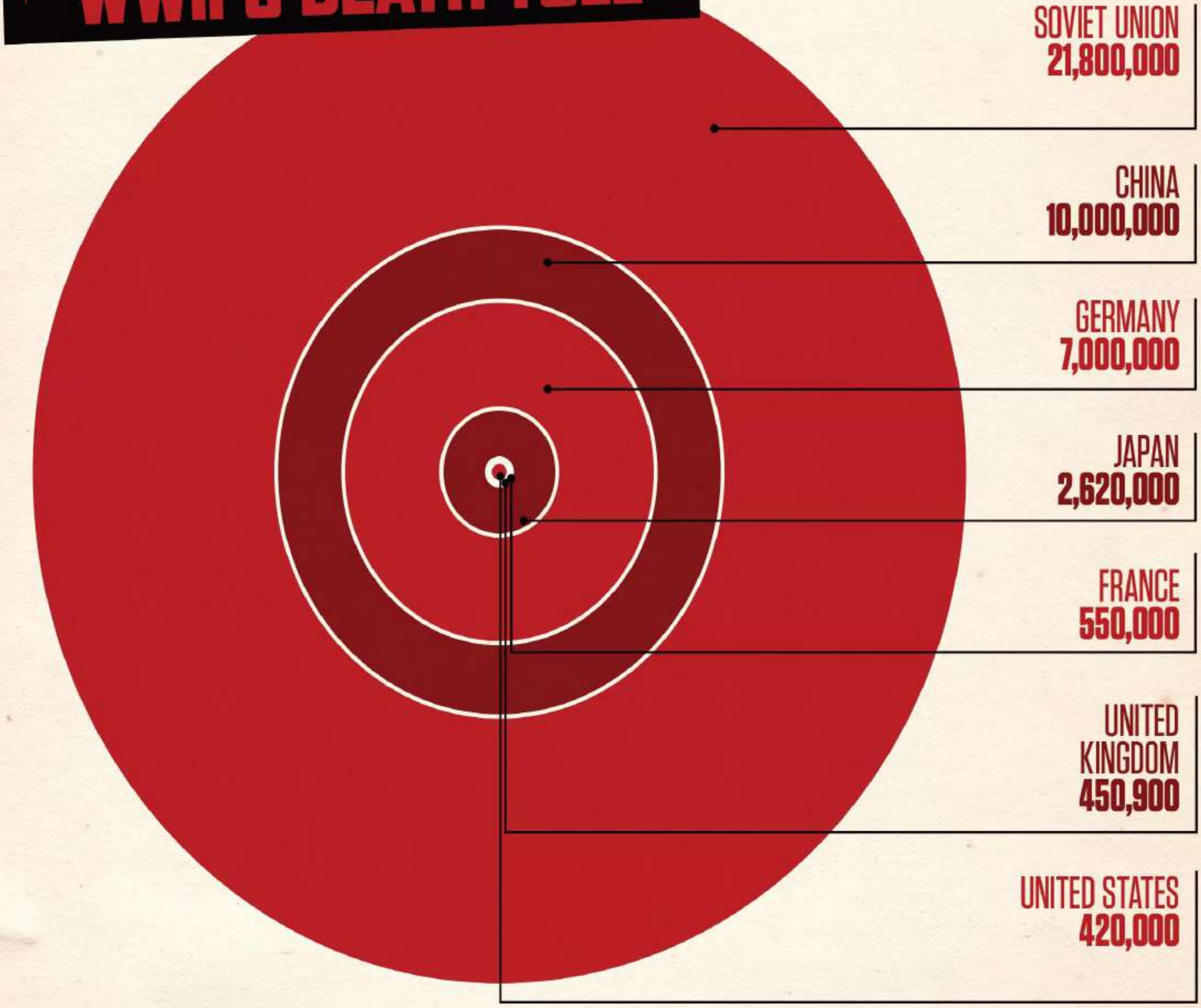
Roosevelt possessed a close relationship with Churchill and this was something he believed could be extended to Stalin, despite warnings from Churchill not to trust the Soviet leader. Roosevelt repeatedly sided with Stalin in order to encourage this relationship, which he believed would prevent Soviet expansion after the war. Instead of standing up to Stalin, something his advisors pushed for, Roosevelt gave him whatever he wanted and referred to him affectionately as 'Uncle Joe.' This naivety was pounced on and exploited by the Soviet dictator, and the results in the coming years proved Roosevelt's approach to be disastrous to the Soviet-American partnership he desired.

Benito Mussolini

The two tyrants

Despite believing in very different political systems, communism and fascism, Stalin and Mussolini had a lot in common. They both tried to establish governments with complete control over their citizens, they used propaganda to do so and they transformed their countries. Mussolini had some admiration toward Stalin, mainly due to his respect for Lenin, but when he allied with Hitler he eliminated any chance of the two men forming a friendship. The Russian dictator considered the Italian leader to be weak and little more than a puppet for Hitler to use as he saw fit. Stalin dismissed Mussolini, paying him and his actions very little attention.

A HEAVY PRICE: WWII'S DEATH TOLL



5 FACTS ABOUT STALINGRAD

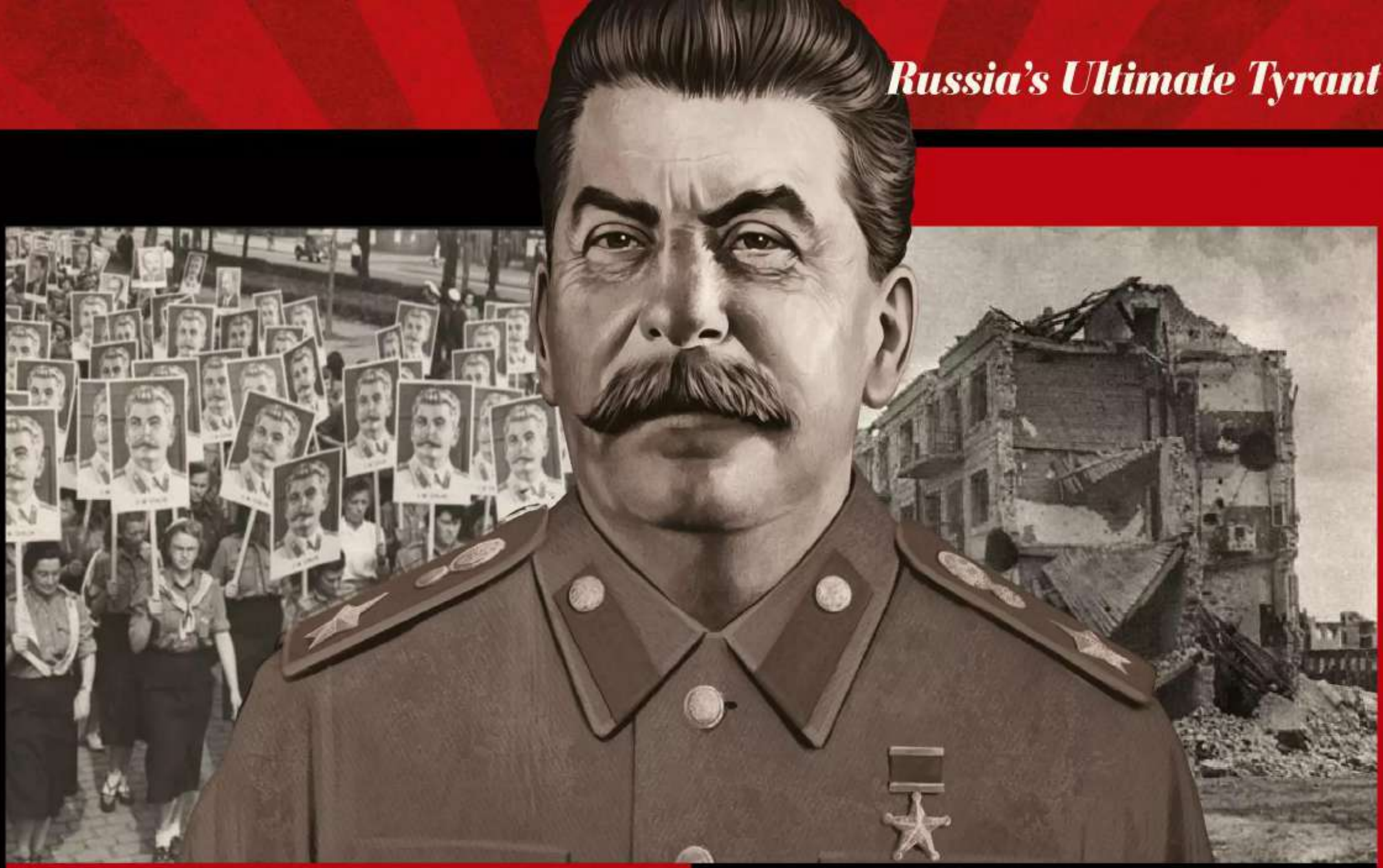
1 110,000 German soldiers were taken prisoner at Stalingrad; by the end of the war only 5,000 of them returned to Germany.

2 Hitler ordered the Sixth Army commander Paulus to fight to the last bullet, who commented, "I've no intention of shooting myself for this Bohemian corporal."

3 One of the deliveries dropped to the German soldiers amid the biting Russian winter was 20 tons of vodka and summer uniforms.

4 The living conditions of the soldiers were so terrible that a Red Army conscript assigned to Stalingrad had a life expectancy of just 24 hours.

5 A national day of mourning was ordered by Hitler, not for the loss of men but for the shame the surrender brought to Germany.



GREAT RULER OR TYRANT?

LOVING FATHER

Stalin adored and doted on his only daughter Svetlana, calling her his "little sparrow." Possessing the red hair and freckles of his own beloved mother, Svetlana described the pride on her father's face as he watched her drive a car: "He sat next to me, beaming with joy. My father couldn't believe I knew how to drive." Even when she sought asylum in the USA she refused to condemn her father, proclaiming the love and respect she felt for him.

Stalin's treatment of his first son, Yakov, was so severe that he attempted to take his own life. He survived, but Stalin simply responded by saying, "He can't even shoot straight." Yakov went on to serve in the Red Army but was captured in WWII. His safe return was promised to his father in exchange for German Field Marshal Friedrich Paulus. Stalin rejected this offer. It is believed that Yakov subsequently committed suicide by running into an electric fence at a concentration camp.

MODERNISATION

During his years as dictator Stalin led the Soviet Union out of its previously backward economy and moved it forward with mass industrialisation. Stalin's five-year plans achieved rapid modernisation despite a very weak economy. New products were developed, the scale and efficiency of production increased and ultimately this mass industrialisation helped greatly in achieving a Soviet victory in WWII.

Although the economic growth under Stalin was significant, figures of the rate of growth are greatly disputed - ranging from the official estimate of 13.9 per cent to the low Western figure of 2.9 per cent. One thing is certain, though; the cost of this modernisation was millions of innocent lives. Stalin's brutal regime caused mass famine across the rural population, with a final death toll of up to 10 million people.

DEATH

When Stalin died, the collective grief that swept through his people was tangible. People wept openly and on his funeral mass wakes were held across the country. To many Stalin was their country's greatest leader, winning WWII and purging the land of those who would plunge Russia back into the rule of the Tsars. When his body was placed in the Hall of Columns, people lined to pay their respects for three days and nights.

In the early hours of 2 March 1953 Stalin suffered a stroke. Despite being the most powerful man in Russia, he lay helpless, alone and soaked in his own stale urine until 10pm that night. Ironically, it was the reign of terror that he himself had constructed that put the final nail in his own coffin, as his guards were scared that entering his room and disobeying his orders would result in their death.

SOCIAL FREEDOM

Women's lives improved significantly under Stalin's rule. They enjoyed equal rights in education and employment, allowing them to succeed in careers previously closed to them. The generation born during Stalin's rule was the first almost universally literate generation in Russian history. Universal healthcare also increased the average life span and sent the numbers of diseases like typhus and cholera to a record low.

Many basic human rights were removed under Stalin and he conducted a removal of all religion through the use of atheistic education, anti-religious propaganda and discriminatory laws. Churches, mosques, temples and sacred monuments were destroyed. Anyone who showed association with religion ran the risk of being killed, along with the tens of thousands of priests, monks and nuns who were martyred under his orders.

YOUNG STALIN

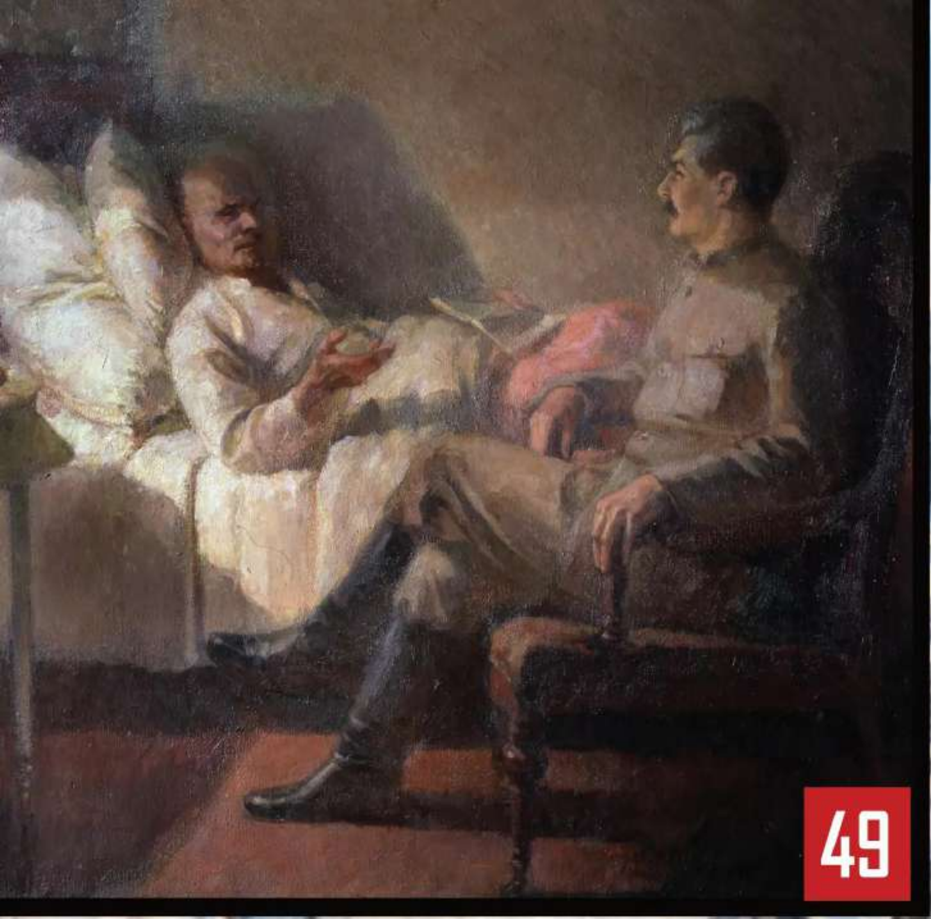
20 BIRTH OF A PRODIGY
Russia's most fearsome and ruthless leader since Ivan the Terrible began life in poverty

24 THE BANDIT YEARS
The transformation from Iosif Dzhugashvili to 'Stalin' followed a path of arrest and exile

34 LENIN'S REVOLUTION
Lenin rode a revolutionary wave into Saint Petersburg and turned society upside down

44 RIGHT-HAND MAN
Trotsky was pivotal to the revolution's success, but his fate was exile and murder

46 STALIN SEIZES POWER
Dismissed by Trotsky as a 'mediocrity', how did Stalin seize absolute power?



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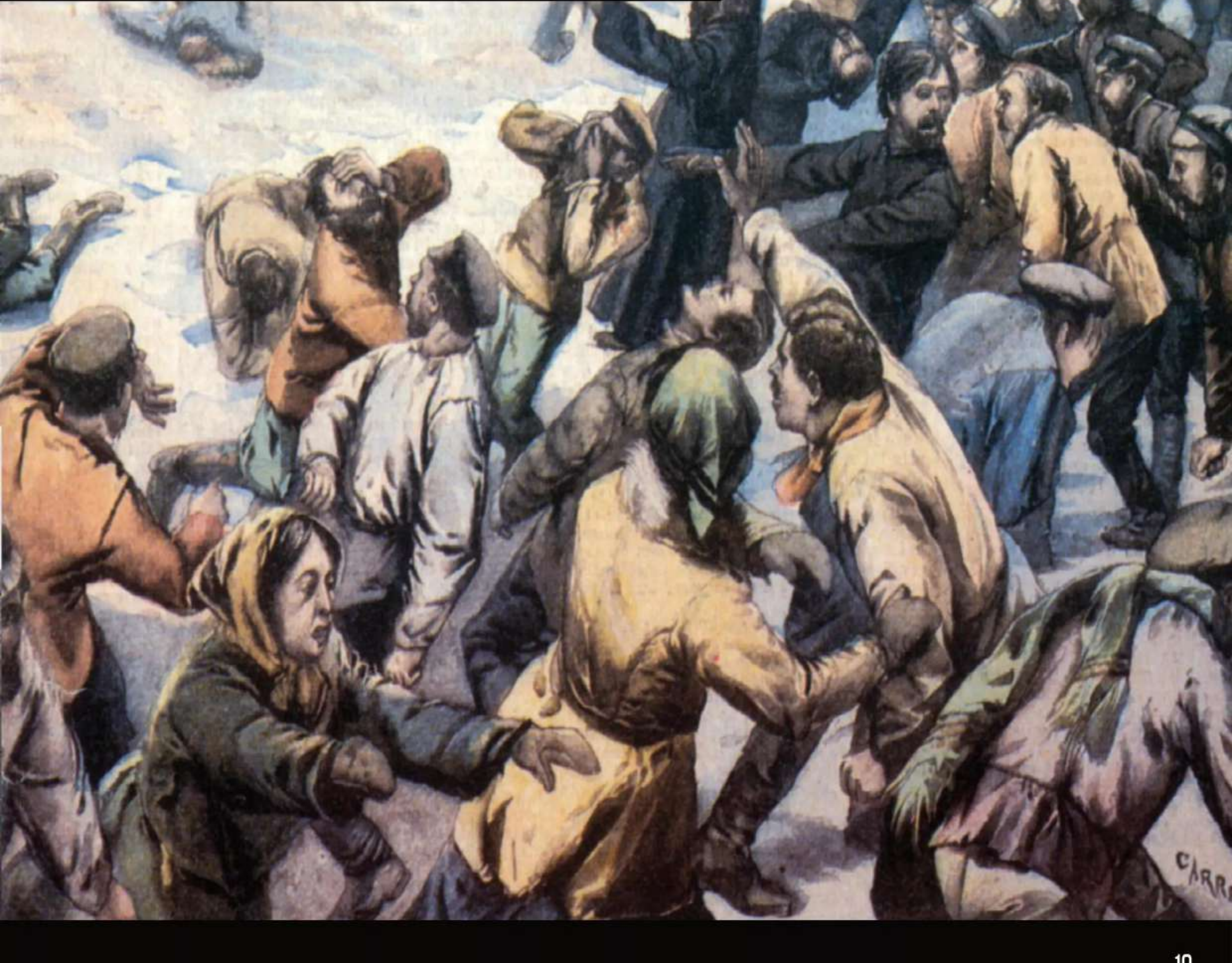

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It once looked as if Stalin had a promising career in the clergy ahead of him

THE BIRTH OF A PRODIGY

Russia's most fearsome and ruthless leader since Ivan the Terrible began life as an impoverished poet and would-be priest

WORDS: GREG KING

Stalin came from the Russian province of Georgia. This single fact explains much in his enigmatic life. Forcibly incorporated into the Tsarist Empire in 1801, Georgia retained its distinct culture and a native tongue incomprehensible to outsiders. Fiercely independent Georgians resented Russian subjugation: Moscow and St Petersburg looked down on them as backward and rural. Georgians, in turn, disdained artifice. St Petersburg aristocrats danced through lavish palaces: Georgians struggled with the realities of daily survival. Superstitious, suspicious, and rebellious, Georgians prided themselves on rugged individualism, strength, and intuitive cunning.

Gori, the small mountain village where Iosif Dzhugashvili was born on 6/18 December 1878 (the dates accounting for the switch from the Julian calendar to the Gregorian one in February 1918), was a backwater. His peasant father Besarion manufactured and sold shoes from one of the two rooms in their modest, earthen brick house. Life was hard: the business was already faltering when Iosif was born and Besarion increasingly took to drinking. Stalin later insisted, "My parents did not treat me badly by any means," but this wasn't quite true. Iosif's peasant mother Ekaterina was the dominant presence in the house. Having lost two sons at young ages previously, she doted on Iosif and became his protector. Ekaterina endured her husband's alcoholism and poverty, but when Besarion began beating her and her son, she left, taking Iosif - called Soso in the family - with her. The deeply religious Ekaterina found refuge with a local priest, and worked as a laundress and a maid to provide for her son.

Stalin's childhood in mountainous Georgia was anything but easy

Besarion left Gori, taking a position as a cobbler in a shoe factory in the Georgian capital of Tiflis: thereafter he had only limited - and contentious - contact with his son. Ekaterina quickly took charge of her son's life. Both she and her wayward husband were born into families of uneducated peasants: Ekaterina wanted more for Iosif. Early on, she arranged for him to take lessons in the Russian language, aware that his native Georgian would hamper his future prospects. When Iosif was ten, and through Ekaterina's influence, an Orthodox priest arranged for him to attend the Gori Church School, a privilege normally reserved for the wealthy and for those intending to seek religious careers. The boy proved to be an excellent student: he had a talent for painting, drama, loved to read, and even composed impressive poetry. A friend later remembered Iosif as "the best but also the naughtiest" student at the school. Indeed, the boy was a study in contrasts: quiet and studious, Iosif, or so his mother later insisted, "was always a good boy. I never had occasion to punish him." Yet Iosif was also full of more than the usual dose of boyish mischief. He got into frequent fights and he liked pulling pranks that, in their underlying danger, suggested a taste for brutality. These included once setting off some explosives in a shop and taunting small animals - incidents that might set off alarm bells with any modern psychologist.

When Iosif was twelve he was seriously injured when a passing carriage ran him down. He had to be moved to a hospital in the Georgian capital of Tiflis, where he spent several months recovering. The accident left him with a permanently damaged left arm, which remained underdeveloped. Then, one day Iosif's estranged father Besarion appeared and had his son discharged into his care. This seems to have been less about paternal affection than financial gain: Besarion got Iosif a job as an apprentice at his factory, hoping to use his son to supplement his meagre household income. Life as a factory worker in Tsarist Russia was a nightmare of long hours, few regulations, frequent accidents and financial exploitation. Iosif was still too young to understand the larger political issues, but the apprenticeship planted the seeds of an eventual rejection of the capitalist system.

Ekaterina accused her husband of kidnapping their son and had Iosif returned to Gori; he apparently never saw his wayward and brutal father again. An event when Iosif was 14 seems to have had an equally momentous effect on him as his brief exposure to the worst excesses of capitalism. One day, teachers at the Gori Church School took their pupils on an outing. The excited schoolboys soon found themselves part of a crowd gathered to watch the public execution by hanging of several peasants convicted of theft - surely a curious choice for an impressionable group of young pupils, but one fully in keeping with the often barbaric nature of Russian life at the time. If the instructors meant to teach a moral lesson it failed: the boy who would grow up to become one of the 20th century's most ruthless killers found the executions horrifying. Iosif sympathised with the condemned, and blamed their actions on the deplorable poverty that was so prevalent among the dispossessed.

"I most wanted that Soso should become a priest," Ekaterina later said. Iosif graduated from Gori Church School in 1894 and his excellent marks and some intervention by his mother won him a partial scholarship at the Tiflis Theological Seminary, run by the Russian Orthodox Church. Here Iosif started courses in September, though it is doubtful that he ever intended to become a priest. Rather, the opportunity offered a way out of poverty and Iosif loved learning: taking classes like Church Slavonic, comparative and moral theology, Latin, Greek, literature, and pastoral care, he did extremely well and received excellent marks. He took his studies seriously, and in his spare time he continued writing poetry and even sang with the seminary choir.

Stalin's mother Ekaterina was a deeply pious woman, but this didn't stop her son becoming an atheist

The authoritarian atmosphere at the Seminary shaped Iosif's increasingly dogmatic way of thinking: cold calculation dictated decisions and for him problems were black or white. Rather than awaken religious ideals, Iosif's time at the seminary fuelled his rebellious streak. Pupils lived under close watch and enjoyed little freedom: one of Iosif's fellow seminary students likened it to "a prison barracks." Stalin himself later complained of "the humiliating regime" and the constant searches of belongings that created an atmosphere of paranoia and repression.

Among those ideas repressed at the seminary was Georgian nationalism: although he would later disdain such ideas as antithetical to socialist goals, Iosif gravitated to the small group of students who met in secret and discussed their country's place in the Tsarist Empire. From such apparently innocuous beginnings sprung the burgeoning revolutionary: the group introduced Iosif to another underground club called the Cheap Library, which was dedicated to the study of forbidden and incendiary texts. With heavy censorship by the Russian state and by the seminary, this offered the thrill of youthful rebellion and secret knowledge. Iosif had always loved to read, and in short order he devoured the works of Nikolai Gogol, Leo Tolstoy, and Émile Zola. Iosif's political ideas began to gel when he read Karl Marx's *Das Kapital*; for the first time he was now able to connect his dismal personal experiences at the Tiflis factory with political theory.

Late 19th century Russia bubbled with anarchist ideas. Iosif was soon reading the underground works of those advocating a revolution. Philosophical authors like Nikolai Nekrasov and Nikolai Chernyshevsky saw the Imperial throne and an avaricious capitalism as the country's twin evils. For ordinary Russians to prosper, they argued, it was necessary to overthrow the entire corrupt system and hand the power to the people.

Perhaps the most influential of the books Iosif read was the obscure 1882 novel *The Patricide* by Georgian writer Alexander Kazbegi. Ostensibly

"HE GOT INTO FREQUENT FIGHTS AND HE LIKED PRANKS THAT, IN THEIR UNDERLYING DANGER, SUGGESTED A TASTE FOR BRUTALITY. THESE INCLUDED ONCE SETTING OFF SOME EXPLOSIVES IN A SHOP"

A 12-year-old Stalin enjoys carefree playtime with his friends

a melodramatic love story, the book was full of the sort of revolutionary themes that the young Iosif found so appealing: Georgia's subjugation by Russia, the necessity of political reform, and the people's need for self governance. Although the bulk of the book focuses on a romantic triangle, it is a fourth character, named Koba, who emerges as the hero, fighting for the oppressed, dispensing vigilante justice, and advancing the cause of freedom. The character, recalled one of Stalin's classmates, "became a divinity for Soso. He wanted to be another Koba, a fighter and a hero." Indeed, Iosif soon adopted the nickname "Koba" as the first of his revolutionary monikers.

These literary and political excursions changed Iosif profoundly. He began attending secret meetings of disillusioned workers and befriended Silibistro Jibladze, leader of an underground Marxist group. And he began to openly rebel at the seminary. The previously studious young man disrupted his classes, disdained keeping to a schedule, and refused demands that he cut his hair. It was customary for pupils to bow and remove their hats when meeting the monks that taught them: Iosif refused, loudly declaring himself to be an atheist. Hoping that this was nothing more than a passing phase, the authorities confined him to a cell, sure that quiet contemplation would convince him of the error of his ways.

Instead, Iosif remained defiant. An avowed atheist sharing classes with would-be priests was intolerable for the seminary. In April 1899, Iosif left the institution and never returned. Although Stalin would later insist he had been expelled for revolutionary activity, the circumstances of his departure remain ambiguous. There is some evidence that Iosif left of his own accord, while his mother later said that she had withdrawn him over worries for his health. It served Stalin to paint his departure as the first overt step on his revolutionary path, but he may have abandoned his studies for more mundane reasons.

Iosif was now 21. He was ruggedly handsome, with vibrant eyes and a moustache that helped conceal scars he had received during a bout of smallpox in 1884. As an adult he stood a mere 5 feet 4 inches tall. His relative lack of height clearly bothered him: he took to wearing double-soled shoes with heels to give himself extra height. His left arm, injured in the carriage accident, was notably shorter than his right, and he tried to disguise this by keeping it bent. Iosif remained true to his roots: he had simple tastes in food and clothing, and disliked anything that smacked of ostentatious display.

Most people found Iosif a bit of a rascal but inevitably charming. He was unusually self-controlled, intelligent and reserved: he spoke slowly, in a soft voice, rarely displaying any anger or strong emotion. Women, in particular, are said to have found the young man irresistible, and he enjoyed sowing his wild oats with a succession of willing peasant girls drawn to his magnetic personality and wild good looks.

These attributes existed alongside far less positive character traits. Iosif was deeply suspicious and trusted no one. He believed in his own intellect, which paved the way for his future position; he liked to argue politics but he could rarely be convinced to abandon his views. The reader, the devoted son, the poet - all were there, but behind his dark eyes lay the soul of a despot.

The house Stalin grew up in is commemorated by a plaque in Georgian

STALIN THE POET

The dictator-as-poet may seem an odd combination, but early in his life Stalin made a name for himself as a talented and descriptive writer

Losif Dzhugashvili was exposed to poetry at an early age. As a young boy he read and memorized the Georgian epic poem *The Knight in the Panther's Skin*. During his education he devoured the works of Shakespeare, Goethe, and Whitman: something in their language and imagery inspired him, and he began composing his own verse. His poems were lyrical celebrations of the beauties of the Georgian landscape, very much in the 19th century Romantic mode, with a deft turn of phrase and captivating imagery.

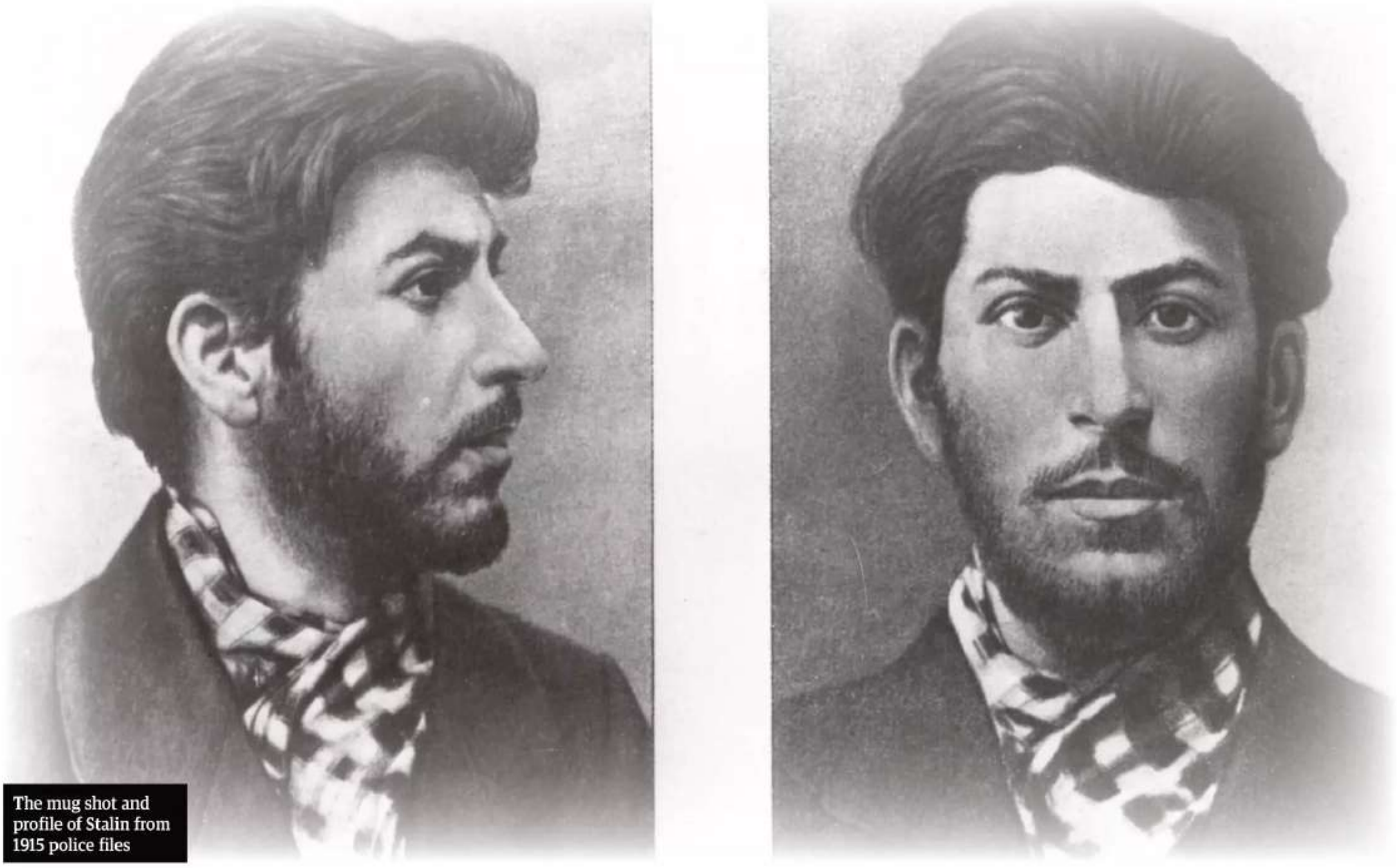
In 1895, when Iosif was 17, famed Georgian poet Ilya Chavchavadze published five of his youthful works in his journal Iveria. Attributed to the pseudonym 'Soselo' they included a poem entitled *Morning*:

> *The pinkish bud has opened,*
> *Rushing to the pale-blue violet*
> *And, stirred by a light breeze,*
> *The lily of the valley has bent over the grass.*

Losif eventually abandoned his pursuit of poetry in favour of revolutionary activities. Although his early works were celebrated, as premier of the USSR Stalin later vetoed suggestions that his poems be republished: it was, he thought, better to be feared by the populace than to reveal this softer side of his enigmatic character.

Thanks to his mother's persuasiveness, Stalin bagged a place at the prestigious Tiflis Seminary

Stalin's father Besarion was abusive to his wife and son



The mug shot and profile of Stalin from 1915 police files

CREATION OF A REVOLUTIONARY

The dramatic transformation of Iosif Dzhugashvili to Joseph Stalin followed the path of arrest, exile, and criminal activity followed by so many of Russia's revolutionaries

WORDS: GREG KING

After leaving the seminary, Iosif Dzhugashvili worked as an accountant at the Tiflis Meteorological Observatory: it would be the only real job he ever held. Here, he discovered that many of his fellow workers belonged to the Social Democratic Party. They began holding secret meetings, discussing socialism and listening as Dzhugashvili lectured them on the need for action. "It was here," he later wrote, "among these comrades, that I received my first revolutionary baptism. My first teachers were the workers of Tiflis." These activities remained secret, at least until Dzhugashvili took the talk one step further: in the spring of 1900 he gave his first speech, exhorting a crowd of some railway 200 workers to embrace socialist ideas and distributing Marxist literature.

Dzhugashvili proved to be a masterful propagandist. He had a talent for organization and a taste for oratorical flair. Although he prided himself on his intellect, he was measured when speaking to workers, charming and lying, honing his words and reducing his arguments to easily grasped principles. He could assess an audience and skilfully play to it. While some found him occasionally insulting and brash - qualities he readily admitted as faults - he was also inspirational and quickly won a reputation as a headstrong firebrand in the socialist fight.

The resulting railway strike that briefly crippled Tiflis stemmed from Dzhugashvili's influence. Authorities began an investigation and, after a year they swooped down on the Observatory, arresting a number of suspected Marxist agitators. Dzhugashvili got lucky: he was on his way to his job when he saw police surrounding the observatory. He left his job without notice and went underground, relying on friends for food and a place to sleep. This deliberate low profile, though, did not stop him from helping organize a May Day demonstration barely a month later. Some 3,000 protesting workers marched through Tiflis, at least until they encountered fierce Cossack troops who quickly galloped into the crowd with whips flying. Fifty protesters were arrested and fourteen were seriously injured, but once again Dzhugashvili managed to evade capture.

Using a succession of aliases, moving from the apartment of one friend to another, Dzhugashvili joined the Social Democratic Party in November 1901 and finally fled to the port city of Batumi on the Black Sea. Here, he once again hurled himself into local revolutionary circles: it is said that he discovered one of the members was actually an spy for the Okhrana, the Tsarist secret police, and arranged for his murder. In Batumi Dzhugashvili got a job, using an alias, at an oil refinery storehouse owned by the Rothschild family, and soon organized several strikes. Police moved in and broke up the demonstrations, arresting several of the leaders. Dzhugashvili arranged another protest at the prison where his comrades were held. In March 1902, a disgruntled mob of workers tried to storm the jail: police opened fire, killing 13 and wounding 54. By now, local authorities had learned of Dzhugashvili's activities and, on 5/18 April, he was arrested when they executed a surprise raid on the house where he was staying.

For a time Dzhugashvili sat in prison, awaiting his sentence. A fellow inmate remembered: "He was scruffy and his pockmarked face made him not particularly neat in appearance. He had a creeping way of walking, taking short steps. When we were let outside for exercise and all of us in our particular groups made for this or that corner of the prison yard, Stalin stayed by himself and walked backwards and forwards with his short paces, and if anyone tried speaking to him, he would open his mouth into that cold smile of his and perhaps say a few words. Not once did I see him get agitated, lose control, get angry, shout, or swear, revealing nothing but an absolute calm."

Dzhugashvili spent these days studying socialist theory. It was while imprisoned that he first made contact with Lenin, whose works he had read and admired for several years. "True," he later recalled, "it was not a personal acquaintance; it was made by correspondence. But it left an indelible impression upon me, one which has never left me throughout all my work in the party... Lenin alone understood the inner essence and urgent needs of our party." To Dzhugashvili, Lenin was a heroic figure, "a mountain eagle who knew no fear in the struggle."

Dzhugashvili was finally sentenced to a three year exile in the remote Siberian village of Novaya Uda near Lake Baikal. He left Batumi in November 1903 and arrived at his new home in the middle of the cripplingly harsh winter. Siberian exile conjures up images of heavily-guarded penal colonies and desolate gulags, but Tsarist Russia was surprisingly benevolent to most of its political outcasts. Few were incarcerated when they reached their destinations, living - as did Dzhugashvili - in the house of some local peasant who received a few rubles to act as innkeeper and watch his charge. Security was non-existent: exiles were free to wander the villages, socialize with others, and pursue their own interests. Given such lax oversight, it isn't surprising that Dzhugashvili waited barely a month before attempting his first escape. He didn't get far before frostbite struck. Authorities caught him and returned him to Novaya Uda, but there was no improvement in the security situation. When the weather improved he made a second escape attempt: this one was successful, and soon he was back in Tiflis, again living under an assumed name and returning to his revolutionary propaganda.

The revolutionary took a job editing the underground Marxist newspaper *Proletarian Struggle*. The previous year, during a meeting

Stalin worked briefly at the Tiflis Meteorological Observatory, on a hill outside the city

Stalin (third from left, back row) and fellow revolutionaries in exile

in London, Lenin had split the Russian Social Democratic Party over disagreements about tactics and political goals; his new majority called themselves Bolsheviks, while the old minority were known as Mensheviks. Already a fan of Lenin, Dzhugashvili quickly took his side, and he used the pages of *Proletarian Struggle* to promote Bolsheviks ideals and to denigrate those Marxists in opposition. He regularly reprinted articles written by the emigre Lenin, and added his own exhortations. "We must," Dzhugashvili wrote, "raise the proletariat to a consciousness of its true class interests, to a consciousness of the Socialist ideal, and not break this ideal up into small change, or adjust it to the spontaneous movement. Lenin has laid down the theoretical basis on which this practical deduction is built." Georgian revolutionaries were largely resistant and Dzhugashvili turned on them. "The brunt of his struggle," recalled one comrade, "was henceforth directed against us, his former friends. He attacked us at every meeting and discussed matters in the most savage and unscrupulous manner, trying to sow poison and hatred against us everywhere."

By the beginning of 1905, Russia was engaged with Japan in an ultimately unsuccessful war as strikes, political assassinations, violent pogroms, and peasant unrest spread across the Tsarist Empire. In January Nicholas II's troops killed hundreds of workers marching on the Winter Palace. Dzhugashvili attacked, writing that "the government has trampled on and mocked our human dignity." Revolution, he warned, "is inevitable and it is just as inevitable as the sunrise. Russia is a loaded gun at full cock, liable to go off at the slightest concussion. Yes comrades, the time is not far off when the revolution will hoist sail and drive the vile throne of the despicable tsar off the face of the earth." And Dzhugashvili did more than write: he formed secret Bolshevik Battle Squads, and led them in revolt. They raided and burned government arsenals and buildings, attacked the police, extorted money, robbed banks, and executed suspected traitors to the movement. One comrade remembered vividly that: "Stalin even then, as now, was not distinguished by talkativeness. Brevity, clarity, accuracy were his distinctive qualities. The natural simplicity of his speech and address, his absolute carelessness of his own private comfort, his inner hardness and complete absence of vanity, the fact that already he was politically educated, made this young revolutionary an authority among the Tiflis workers, who looked upon him as one of themselves."

> **"YES COMRADES, THE TIME IS NOT FAR OFF WHEN THE REVOLUTION WILL HOIST SAIL AND DRIVE THE VILE THRONE OF THE DESPICABLE TSAR OFF THE FACE OF THE EARTH"**

Stalin photographed in 1915 while exiled

In October 1905 Nicholas II, under great pressure, finally relented and granted his people a constitution and an elected parliament, the Duma. Although the fires of revolution still flared at the edges, the bonfire had been put out. A few weeks later, a dejected Dzhugashvili traveled to Finland to attend a secret Bolshevik conference. It was his first meeting with Lenin, and he was sorely disappointed. "I was hoping to see the mountain eagle of our party," he later recalled. "I was hoping to see a great man, great not only politically but physically. In my imagination I pictured Lenin as a giant, stately and imposing. What then was my disappointment to see a most ordinary looking man, below average height, in no way distinguishable from ordinary mortals." But Lenin soon won him over with his rhetoric and coldly practical approach. When Dzhugashvili returned to Georgia, with Lenin's support, he accelerated his violent campaign of sabotage and robbery, adding kidnapping for ransom to his repertoire. In June 1907, using stolen guns and homemade bombs, he and his bandits attacked an armed convey delivering money to the State Bank in Tiflis; some 40 people were killed, but the revolutionaries made off with roughly 250,000 rubles, a staggering sum with which to finance their continued movement.

Aware that authorities in Tiflis were hot on his trail, Dzhugashvili fled to Baku, where he continued spreading Bolshevik propaganda. "Two years of revolutionary work among the oil workers of Baku," he recalled, "hardened me as a practical fighter and as one of the practical leaders. In contrast with advanced workers of Baku... in the storm of the deepest conflicts between workers and oil industrialists, I first learned what it meant to lead big masses of workers. There in Baku I received my second revolutionary baptism by fire."

After a string of robberies, kidnappings, and violent attacks on government installations, authorities in Baku began to chase the mysterious Georgian revolutionary. On 25 March 1908, he was arrested in a police raid and imprisoned. It took nearly ten months before the inexorable machinery of Tsarist justice delivered a verdict, sentencing Dzhugashvili to two years of political exile under house arrest at the Siberian town of Solvychegodsk near Vologda. He arrived there in February 1909

When Lenin returned from exile, the Russian Revolution stepped up

but, as with his previous exile, security was almost nonexistent and in June he escaped. Disguised as a woman, he eventually made his way to St Petersburg. Authorities found him in March 1910 and simply sent him back to Solvychegodsk.

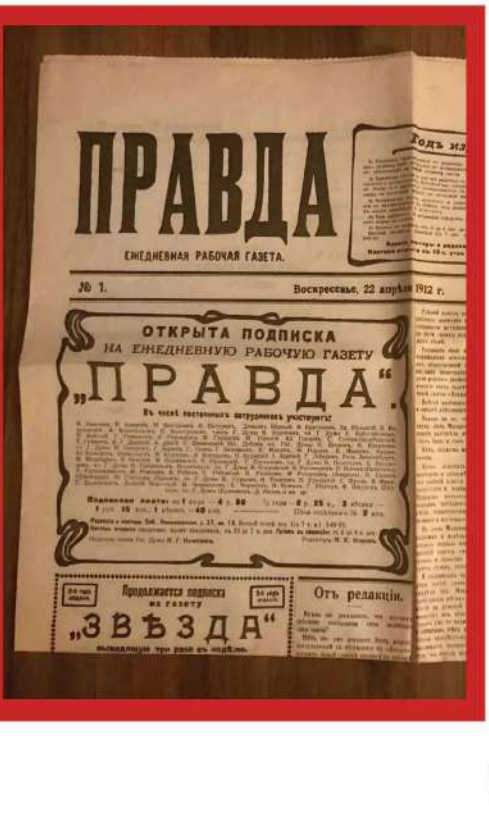
This time Dzhugashvili didn't run: in June 1911 he was officially released from house arrest and received permission to move to Vologda. Two months later, he returned to St Petersburg, although the conditions of his release had barred him from the Imperial capital. Just as swiftly the Okhrana found and arrested him: he again returned to Vologda, this time as a prisoner with a new, three-year sentence of political exile.

When Dzhugashvili learned that Lenin had invited him to join the newly formed Bolshevik Central Committee, the Georgian revolutionary was so overwhelmed that he once again slipped away from his exile in Vologda. He made straight for St Petersburg, determined to advance the Bolshevik cause. With this new purpose came a new name. After using various aliases throughout the past decade, Dzhugashvili decided that he needed something permanent, something more suited to his fierce reputation. He was not willing to abandon

THE BIRTH OF PRAVDA

Although *Pravda* had existed in one form or another for several decades, Stalin transformed it into a powerful tool when he became editor in 1912

"A newspaper," Lenin once wrote, "should be not only a collective agitator, but a collective organser." This idea became Stalin's driving force when he became editor of *Pravda* in 1912. The paper had existed, in intermittent forms and under a variety of names and political aims, for nearly two decades before Stalin took over. It was not a Bolshevik organ: indeed, the Social Democratic Party, along with luminaries like Maxim Gorky, funded the production. The first daily edition was a mere four pages: among the articles on economic questions and workers' rights, Stalin reverted to one of his early passions, publishing two poems extolling the virtues of the proletariat. Stalin later admitted that it was "not an ordinary paper" but instead "an organisational centre for consolidating the underground hearts of the party." As such, it was destined to play a crucial role in the revolution.



ПРАВДА

ЕЖЕДНЕВНАЯ РАБОЧАЯ ГАЗЕТА.

№ 1.

Воскресенье, 22 апрѣля 1912 г.

ОТКРЫТА ПОДПИСКА
НА ЕЖЕДНЕВНУЮ РАБОЧУЮ ГАЗЕТУ
„ПРАВДА".

Въ числѣ постоянныхъ сотрудниковъ участвуютъ:

Продолжается подписка
на газету
„ЗВѢЗДА"
выходящую три раза въ недѣлю.

Отъ редакціи.

"PRAVDA WAS PUBLISHED LEGALLY, ALTHOUGH ITS ARTICLES AND EDITORIALS COULD STILL BE CENSORED IF AUTHORITIES DEEMED THEM TOO PROVOCATIVE"

Koba, the hero of Alexander Kazbergi's 1882 book, but Dzhugashvili was too ethnic for a man who envisioned himself helping reshape Russian history. He replaced his Georgian surname with Stalin, derived from the Russian word for steel, which suggested strength and resolve.

In St Petersburg the newly named Stalin found refuge with a sympathetic member of the Duma. Rather than violence he now returned to his literary talents, charged with the overhaul of the weekly socialist newspaper *Zvezda* (Star) into a daily, called *Pravda* (Truth). The constitution of 1905 had allowed freedom of the press: *Pravda* was published legally, although its articles and editorials could still be censored if authorities deemed them too provocative and, given his fugitive status, Stalin concealed his role as editor. The first issue appeared on 22 April/5 May 1912 and it immediately became a popular organ for the disillusioned and dispossessed, espousing reforms and promoting the rights of workers. "The *Pravda* of 1912," Stalin later wrote, "was the laying of the cornerstone of the Bolshevik victory in 1917."

Stalin's triumph was short lived: the same day the first issue of *Pravda* appeared authorities arrested him when he made the mistake of leaving his lair. This time he was sentenced to another three years of Siberian exile. In July 1912, he arrived at the remote village of Narym, where he first met his fellow Bolshevik exile Yakov Sverdlov, who was destined to assume an important government position when Lenin finally came to power. By September, the two men had escaped and returned to St Petersburg. Although Stalin continued his work with Pravda, he was careful to keep his presence in the capital a secret. Even so, he managed to twice leave the city and the country without detection. In late 1912 he again met Lenin, this time in Krakow, and in early 1913 he traveled to Vienna, where he remained for some time.

During their meeting in Poland, Stalin and Lenin had discussed what the latter termed "the national question" of how the Bolsheviks should address the conflicting goals of Russia's various ethnic minorities. Lenin wrote to Maxim Gorky: "I agree that it is time to take up the national question. We have here with us a wonderful Georgian, who has collected all the materials and will settle down to prepare a big article on the subject." First published in the spring of 1913 and attributed to "K. Stalin," "Marxism and the National Question" attempted to set forth a Bolshevik formula to counter any ideas of ethnic or cultural autonomy - quite a political change from the man who had once embraced Georgian nationalism. Now, he argued, separatist ideas would inevitably harm those who sought such special status: ethnic minorities in any one region would likely be pushed aside as the interests of the majority prevailed. Instead, he advised that only the unification of various nationalities and ethnic groups under a single state could ensure equality and protect the rights of the few.

Lenin was delighted with "Marxism and the National Question," and praised Stalin's concise explanations of the need for unified control. The publication brought Stalin new attention, especially from the Okhrana. When he returned to St Petersburg, the authorities quickly traced his movements and arrested him when he foolishly made a public appearance at what must rank as one of the strangest Bolshevik fundraisers ever given - a fancy masquerade ball in the heart of the city. This time, the authorities sentenced him to four years in the town of Kostino in Siberia, whose remote situation made any potential escape from it highly unlikely.

Stalin was unhappy with his new situation. Surrounded by a swampy wasteland, Kostino was devoid of vegetation. The former poet who had rhapsodized about the beauties of his native Georgia was now reduced to begging friends for

Factory workers take to the streets on the first day of the February Revolution
КОРМИТЕ ДѢТЕЙ ЗАЩИТНИКОВЪ РОДИНЫ
ПРИБАВКУ ПАЙКА
СЕМЬЯМЪ СОЛДАТЪ
ЗАЩИТНИКАМЪ СВОБОДЫ
И НАРОДНОГО МIРА.
БРАТЬЯ МОРИ
БРАТЬЯ

the smallest favours possible: "I shall be satisfied," he wrote to a friend, "if from time to time you send me a picture postcard with scenes of nature and the like. In this accursed region nature is bare to the point of ugliness - in summer, a river, in winter, snow, that's all that nature offers here, and I am stupidly homesick for scenes of nature even if only on paper."

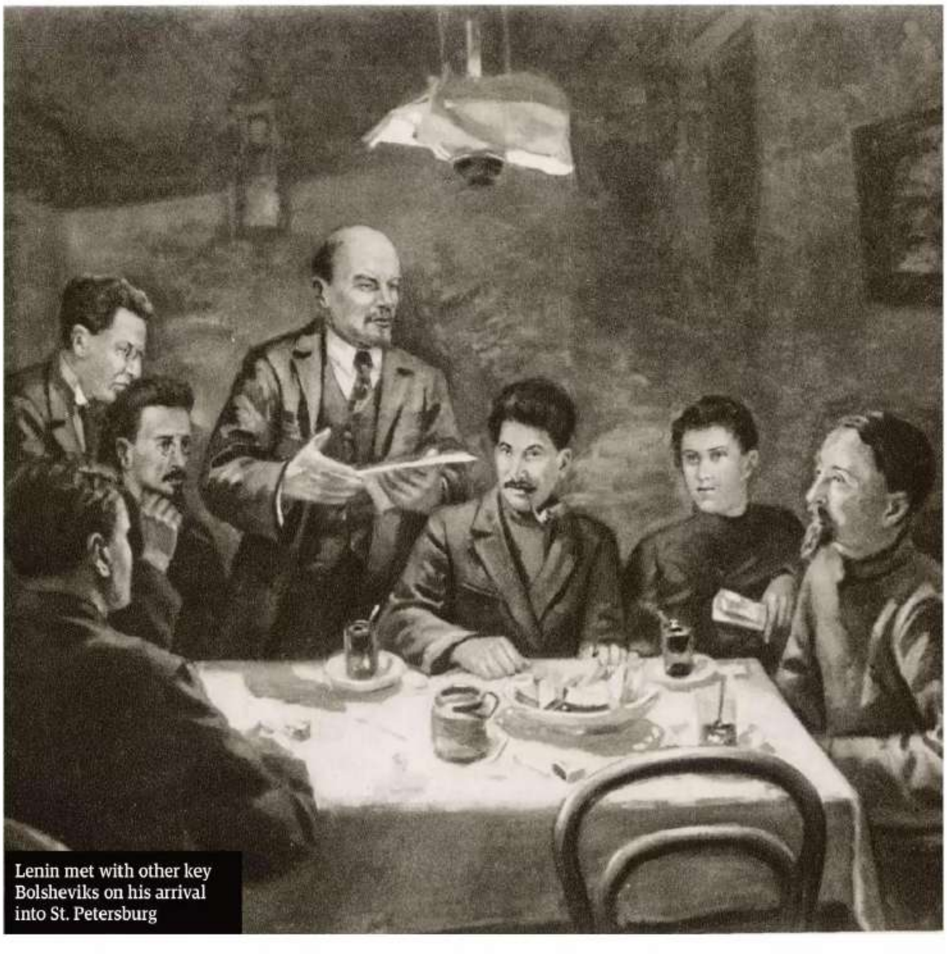
Stalin's disillusion with the Tsarist political system swelled greatly in March 1914 when, fearing that he might attempt another escape from his enforced Siberian home, authorities moved him to the even more remote village of Kurieka at the frozen edge of the Arctic Circle. The situation wasn't helped when Stalin once again found himself sharing his exile with Sverdlov. "He is a good fellow," Sverdlov wrote of Stalin, "but too much of an individualist in his everyday conduct. I, on the other hand, am a believer in a minimum of orderliness." Stalin, he complained, "displays only the pettiness of life. We live in separate rooms and rarely see each other."

"AS WITH HIS PREVIOUS EXILES, AUTHORITIES ALLOWED STALIN AN EXTRAORDINARY LATITUDE: HE OFTEN WENT FISHING ALONE AND, ARMED WITH HIS OWN GUN, HUNTED FOX, WOLVES AND DUCKS"

At first Stalin spent his days reading working on future publications, but the futility of his situation got to him and for a time he nearly abandoned his intellectual pursuits. Instead, he began drinking and seduced a 13-year-old local girl, who was soon pregnant (the child, a son, was born in December 1914 but died in infancy). The legal age of consent in Imperial Russia was 14, and this development didn't sit well with the authorities. At the end of the summer of 1914 Stalin was exiled to the even more remote hamlet of Selivanikha. He still had considerable freedom. Stalin moved freely about the village, befriending the locals, playing with their children and even serving as an informal doctor. As with his previous exiles, authorities allowed Stalin an extraordinary latitude: he often went fishing alone and, armed with his own gun, hunted fox, wolves and ducks to pass the time.

Selivanikha was where Stalin passed the early years of World War I. The Bolsheviks condemned the conflict as a capitalist struggle, but patriotic fervour led millions of Russians to march to their deaths. The idea of a revolution must have seemed very distant, at least before the military setbacks and public opinion began to turn against the throne. Nicholas II took personal command of the army and left daily control of his government to his unpopular and unstable wife Empress Alexandra. Her reliance on the notorious Siberian peasant Gregory Rasputin further undermined confidence in the Tsarist regime. After three years of conflict, crippling inflation, food and fuel shortages, and millions of dead and wounded, Imperial Russia was staggering toward an abyss.

Faced with ever increasing losses of manpower, the Russian Army began conscripting political



Lenin met with other key Bolsheviks on his arrival into St. Petersburg

STALIN'S FIRST FAMILY

Stalin had a number of romantic and sexual relationships, but it was the tragic end of his first marriage that hardened his heart

Stalin had a complex history with a variety of women and produced several children, but it was his first marriage that most shaped his character. In 1906 he married Ekaterina Svanidze, a Georgian peasant girl and relative of the Alliluiev family with whom he lived in hiding (and who also provided him with his second wife). He even consented to her wish for a church wedding, despite his avowed atheism. "His marriage," recalled a friend, "was a happy one, because his wife, who could not measure up to him in intellect, regarded him as a demigod." In March 1907 Ekaterina bore Stalin a son, Yakov, but any domestic happiness was short. That autumn, Ekaterina fell ill with typhus and died in his arms on 22 November/5 December. Stalin was so shattered that friends took away his revolver, fearing that he would commit suicide. At the funeral, recalled a witness, "his pale face reflected the heartfelt anguish caused by the death of his faithful companion." The distraught husband threw himself on the coffin in tears, but the service was interrupted when Okhrana officers - hearing of Ekaterina's death and unwilling to pass up a chance to nab her wanted husband - raided the cemetery. Stalin fled, leaving his son with his wife's family. Ekaterina's death, Stalin freely admitted, forever changed him. "This creature softened my stony heart," he commented. "She is dead and with her have died my last warm feelings for all human beings."

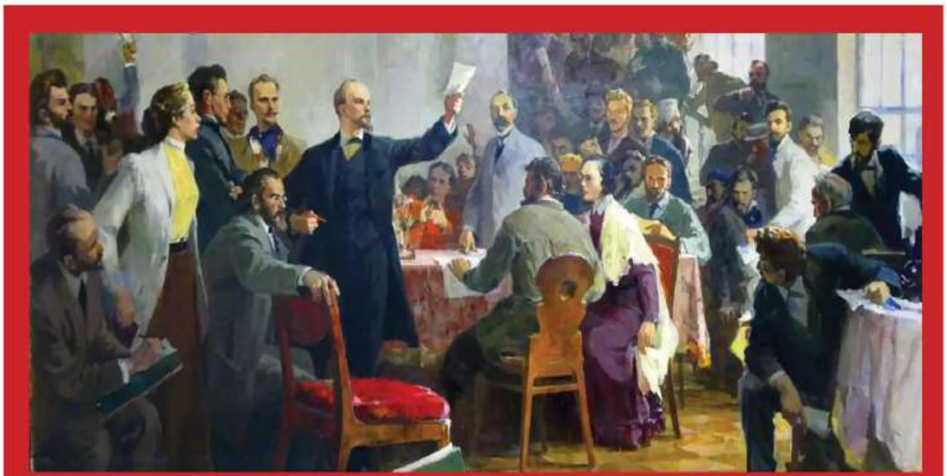
Kerensky was the leader of the Provisional Government when it was ousted

exiles and petty criminals. In October 1916 Stalin was ordered to report for duty at Krasnoyarsk. The journey took three months. By the time Stalin arrived Rasputin had been assassinated and the empire bubbled with talk of revolution. The would-be soldier from Georgia failed to pass the army's physical examination: his crippled left arm prevented his conscription. He still had a few months left on his sentence: rather than force him to make the arduous journey back to Selivanikha, authorities allowed him to finish his exile in the nearby town of Achinsk, where he promptly found lodging with a fellow Bolshevik.

Stalin had barely settled in at Achinsk when word came that revolution had erupted in the imperial capital, renamed Petrograd at the start of the war. In the wake of strikes, mutinies, and riots a new Provisional Government toppled the imperial order and forced the abdication of Nicholas II, ending the 304-year-old Romanov Dynasty. Petrograd was where Stalin wanted to be. Prince George Lvov, the new Prime Minister, had declared an amnesty for all political prisoners and exiles: thus freed, Stalin packed a battered straw suitcase, donned an old suit and, typewriter in hand, boarded a train to the Russian capital. He arrived on 12/25 March 1917 and immediately set to work. During his absence Vyacheslav Molotov and Alexander Shlyapnikov had taken over as editors at *Pravda* and Stalin wanted the position back. Together with his fellow Bolshevik Lev Kamenev, he quickly engineered a coup: within 48 hours of arriving back in Petrograd, Stalin had ousted his rivals, "without unnecessary fuss," as Molotov recalled, but "quite delicately." Indeed, all was quickly forgiven and Stalin soon moved in with Molotov, beginning a longstanding friendship between them. But the very next day following his successful coup, Stalin penned his first post-revolution article for the newspaper, calling for "land to the peasants, protection of labour for workers, and a democratic republic for all the citizens of Russia."

No one quite knew the goals of the Provisional Government, and the Petrograd Soviet seemed amenable to working with them. Indeed, Stalin believed that talk of a sweeping socialist revolution was premature. Ironically, he parroted the same line that Nicholas II had used in rejecting widespread reforms: the Russian people were still too ignorant and uneducated to be given governing responsibilities. He deemed the idea of a popular socialist revolution "Utopian" given the country's circumstances. Instead, it was, Stalin thought, best that the Soviet support the Provisional Government; he even suggested that the Bolsheviks back the government's decision to continue World War I - a position that Lenin found abhorrent. Stalin was independent enough, especially with Lenin languishing in Swiss exile, to reject his mentor's newest article which urged an end to the war and the overthrow of the Provisional Government. In refusing to publish the appeal in Pravda, Stalin argued that Lenin's points were "unsatisfactory" and lacked any factual foundation.

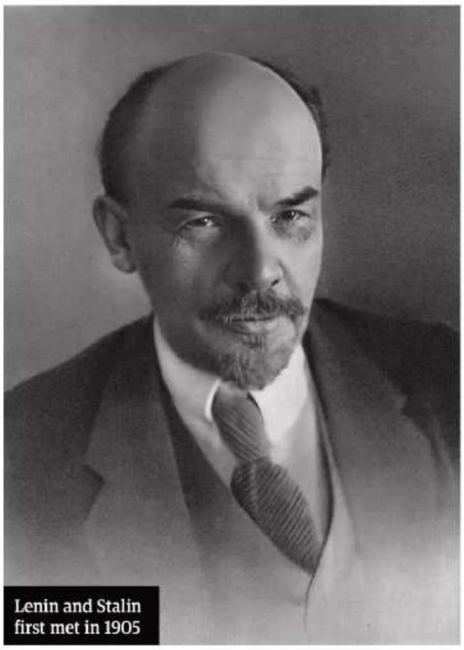
> **"THE WOULD-BE SOLDIER FROM GEORGIA FAILED TO PASS THE ARMY'S PHYSICAL EXAMINATION: HIS CRIPPLED LEFT ARM PREVENTED HIS CONSCRIPTION"**



THE 1903 SECOND CONGRESS IN LONDON

In 1903 the Russian Social Democratic Party met in London. Lenin split the party and emerged as a victorious leader in exile

In 1903, while Stalin languished in prison, the Russian Social Democratic Party met for their Second Congress in London. The Party was in a state of flux, torn between Lenin and Julius Martov over tactics and goals. Lenin wanted a restrictive party membership, granted only to proven professional revolutionaries: sympathisers were welcome to lend their support but, he insisted, should not be trusted with key positions. Martov, on the other hand, argued for growth and insisted that all should be welcome. When the issue came up for a vote Martov won, but it was to be his only victory. With the support of George Plekhanov, Lenin succeeded in pushing Martov's supporters out of key positions, effectively seizing control of the party. "Lenin's behavior seemed unpardonable to me," wrote Leon Trotsky, "both horrible and outrageous. And yet, politically it was right and necessary, from the point of view of organisation. The break with the older ones, who remained in the preparatory stages, was inevitable in any case. Lenin understood this before anyone else did." Lenin emerged the clear victor: those who had voted with him and the winning side would henceforth be known as Bolsheviks, while Martov's Social Democratic followers took the name Mensheviks after their minority status.



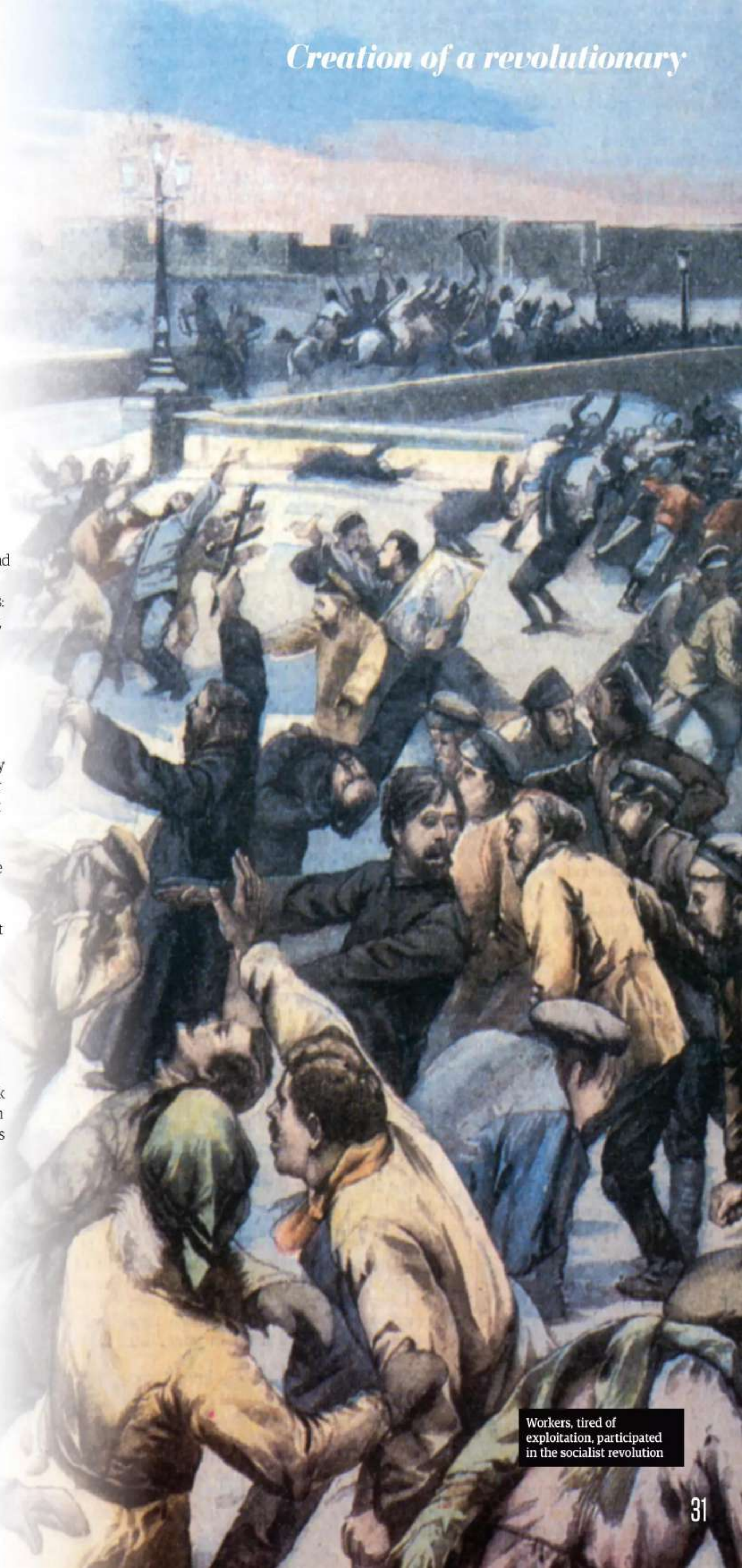
Lenin and Stalin first met in 1905

Lenin was being theoretical: Stalin was being practical. He realised that the Petrograd Soviet could demand concessions from the Provisional Government in exchange for its cooperation, but he also recognised that the Bolshevik position as espoused by Lenin was - at least for the time being - destined to fail. Of the approximately 1,500 members of the Petrograd Soviet, less than fifty were Bolsheviks: the rest were Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, and their powerful position was enough to dictate caution. Although Stalin quickly won appointment as the Bolshevik representative to the Executive Committee of the Petrograd Soviet, he knew it would be too easy for the body to marginalise or even expel the Bolsheviks: Stalin was canny enough to bide his time until the numbers had swung in their favour.

And the Provisional Government seemed more than willing to curry favour with the new Petrograd Soviet in exchange for their support. The Soviet had already won amnesty for all political prisoners: now they pushed for freedom of speech, assembly, and press, and the right of workers to strike at will. Class and religious distinctions, they insisted, should be abolished. There was already talk of electing a constituent assembly to replace the Provisional Government: the Soviet insisted that the vote be extended to all Russians and that all provincial authorities should likewise be elected by secret and universal ballot. Desperate to keep their fragile hold on power, the Provisional Government agreed to nearly all of these demands.

Petrograd's Bolsheviks had commandeered an elegant art nouveau mansion - ironically the home of Nicholas II's former ballerina mistress Mathilde Kschessinska - as their headquarters. Here, in these elegant surroundings, they plotted their next moves, holding a secret meeting on 31 March/12 April. But Lenin would soon be back in Petrograd: on 3/16 April, his infamous "sealed train" arrived after passing through Germany and Poland. Stalin was at the Finland Station to welcome him amid a frenzy of waving red flags and revolutionary cheers. Lenin launched into what became known as his April Theses, in which he outlined Bolshevik goals. He echoed tenets of Stalin's editorial, though in more pronounced fashion, arguing that peasants should seize land from the wealthy and that workers should take control of their factories. The greatest difference between the two men, though, remained the question of the war and Bolshevik

"HE KNEW IT WOULD BE TOO EASY TO MARGINALISE OR EVEN EXPEL THE BOLSHEVIKS: STALIN WAS CANNY ENOUGH TO BIDE HIS TIME UNTIL THE NUMBERS HAD SWUNG IN THEIR FAVOUR"



Workers, tired of exploitation, participated in the socialist revolution

The Petrograd Soviet sat in the chambers of the Tsar-created Duma

support for the Provisional Government. Lenin was adamant that Russia withdraw from the war and angrily denounced those Bolsheviks, like Stalin, who had advocated its continuation. He also called upon the Bolsheviks to stand in opposition to the Provisional Government, such as it was.

These last two positions struck directly at Stalin's previous pronouncements. When, on 16/29 April, the Bolshevik Central Committee overwhelmingly elected Lenin the die was cast. Stalin abruptly abandoned his previous positions, and now used *Pravda* to condemn the Provisional Government and the continued war. Despite this turn, relations between Stalin and Lenin were often uneasy. Stalin supported an armed Bolshevik demonstration in Petrograd that July and threatened to resign from the Party when Lenin refused to support it. The ensuing coup attempt failed and, as Lenin had worried, only brought renewed government scrutiny. On 5/18 July the Pravda offices were raided: Stalin smuggled Lenin out of Petrograd to Finland, where he would remain in hiding for several months before emerging.

The Provisional Government deemed Stalin of no importance and did not bother to arrest him: he remained in the capital, editing *Pravda* and acting, along with his former comrade in exile Sverdlov, as a Bolshevik leader in Lenin's absence. In these months support for the Provisional Government crumbled. People were tired of the war and the continued chaos. In late August the new Prime Minister Alexander Kerensky, suspecting a possible coup, dismissed General Lavr Kornilov as Commander-in-Chief of the Army. Equally paranoid, Kornilov thought that the Bolsheviks had forced Kerensky's hand and decided to lead his troops in a coup against the Provisional Government. Kerensky got wind of this and made a fateful decision, asking the Petrograd Soviet to help him defend the existing order. He even provided them with an arsenal of weapons to repel the looming attack. In the end the coup attempt faltered, but Kerensky's actions had strengthened and armed the Bolsheviks, whose ranks now swelled as September passed in an uneasy quiet.

With Petrograd in chaos, Lenin returned from hiding in Finland and began promoting the idea of a Bolshevik coup. Stalin quickly parroted these views in the pages of *Pravda*. "The existing government of landlords and capitalists," he urged, "must be replaced by a new government, a government of workers and peasants. The existing pseudo-government which was not elected by the people and which is not accountable to the people must be replaced by a government recognized by the people, elected by representatives of the workers, soldiers and peasants and held accountable to their representatives." The actors were now in place: the stage was set for the Bolshevik revolution.

"WITH PETROGRAD IN CHAOS, LENIN RETURNED FROM HIDING AND BEGAN PROMOTING THE IDEA OF A BOLSHEVIK COUP. STALIN QUICKLY PARROTED THESE VIEWS IN PRAVDA"

A street barricade during the February revolution

A bust of Stalin on display at Moscow's State Historical Museum's exhibition marking the centenary of the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution

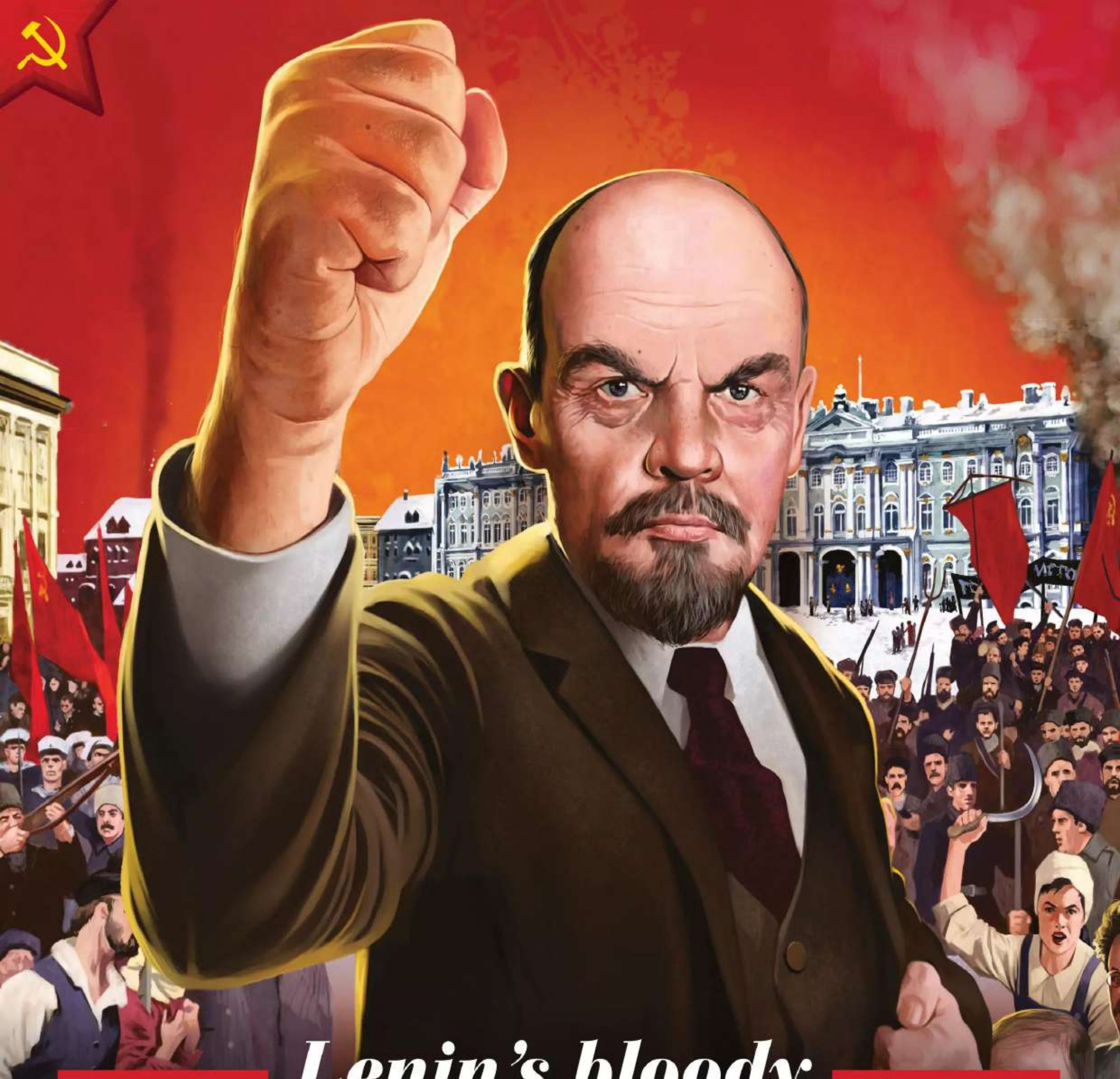
Lenin disguised himself as a worker when he briefly went into hiding in Finland

THE FEBRUARY REVOLUTION

In February 1917, revolution engulfed Petrograd: over nine days the government fell and Tsar Nicholas II abdicated the Russian throne

Russia's February Revolution erupted in an unexpected and haphazard manner. On February 22/7 March, workers at the Putilov Factory, Petrograd's largest steelworks, went on strike; the following day, International Women's Day, saw angry students and hungry protesters join disillusioned workers in the streets. In 24 hours a general strike paralysed the city as some 200,000 demonstrators demanded bread, peace, and an end to the monarchy. Nicholas II, away at army headquarters, ordered Petrograd's military commander to put the revolt down by force: 169 protesters were killed and thousands injured when the troops opened fire. Michael Rodzianko, President of the Duma, urged the Tsar to grant concessions, adding, "Delay is impossible." Nicholas rejected this advice: "That fat Rodzianko has sent me more nonsense to which I shall not even bother to respond."

By February 27/12 March Petrograd was in chaos: shops were looted, buildings set ablaze, and police and units of the Imperial Guard began deserted. As mobs attacked emblems of the Romanov dynasty, pulling them from storefronts and streetlamps, the Duma proclaimed itself the Provisional Government and demanded the Tsar's abdication. The train carrying Nicholas II back to his capital diverted to the town of Pskov to avoid capture by revolutionaries. Here, on 2/15 March, the Tsar reluctantly abdicated, ending Romanov rule in Russia. He would be imprisoned and executed thereafter.



Lenin's bloody REVOLUTION

Years of civil unrest came to a head in October 1917 as Lenin rode a revolutionary wave into Saint Petersburg and turned society upside down

КРАСНАЯ ГВАРДІЯ
ЗАВОДА
ВУЛКАНЪ
II. ГР.

Members of the Red Guard in October 1917

Guns roared, thousands of voices yelled from the streets in defiance, and on 23 October (OS) / 5 November (NS) 1917, the massed supporters of Vladimir Lenin laid siege to Saint Petersburg's Winter Palace, the site of an ineffectual government, and the capstone event of a socialist revolution. For Lenin and his troops it was both a political and an ideological victory: the triumphant end to years of secretive theorising and plotting, many of them spent by Lenin in exile, before he returned to Russia to "liberate" his people. If the celebrations were short lived, the inversion of society to replace an autocracy with a socialist system was an extraordinary achievement.

Russia, even as late as the late-1800s, had seen a nobility of about a million presiding over a peasantry of 97 million; according to an 1897 census there was practically no middle class. Industry was overwhelmingly agricultural, with the peasantry working on land that belonged to the rich minority. An act of 1861 turned some of this land over to communal peasant ownership, but the government had provided compensation to the landowners, and the peasant communes were now responsible for the repayment of this debt to the government. These payments were abolished in 1905, but until then, the peasants were as beholden to their communes as they had been to the landowners. The population was also steadily increasing, which meant there wasn't enough land to go around, leading to unrest. The oil and railway industry booms of the industrial revolution happened slower and later in Russia than in other parts of Europe, but when they arrived they started to create a growing middle class more inclined towards western-style capitalist business interests than had hitherto been the Russian norm. Workers migrated to industrial areas, but while some official monitoring nominally took place, the overcrowded slum conditions workers had to endure were appalling.

Russia at this time was presided over by the Tsar, whose rule was propped up by the army, the police, the Russian Orthodox Church, the land-owning nobility and the bureaucracy. Alexander II (1855-81) had brought in some reforms, such as elective assemblies to represent peasant agricultural and industrial workers in local government. Alexander III (1881-94), however, began to roll back these changes, and Nicholas II, the last Tsar of Russia, disappointed many by sticking to that hard line. He considered any notion of societal reform "a senseless dream" and let it be known that he was resolutely committed to the principle of autocracy.

As early as the 1860s various seeds of revolutionary thought were beginning to be sown. Movements like The Populists began musing on a future moving away from a monolithic state and more towards a country with a multiplicity of mutually supportive communes. These idealistic notions hit something of a bump when students from the universities started taking the message out into the countryside and found the peasant agricultural labourers actually hostile to their ideas, thinking the students' well-intentioned notions ridiculous, lofty and unachievable. Populism was abandoned, and in its place, the ideas of a political analyst called Karl Marx began to find favour.

"POPULISM WAS ABANDONED, AND IN ITS PLACE, THE IDEAS OF A POLITICAL ANALYST CALLED KARL MARX BEGAN TO FIND FAVOUR"

Marx was often frustrated at the way his followers simplified his complex writings and ran with them in directions he didn't approve of, but the key idea of his that people latched on to revolved around the control of the means of production. History, Marx believed, was a never-ending process of change in which particular social classes exploited the labour of everyone else and established dominance, only for their hegemony to become outmoded, after which they were naturally replaced by another up-and-coming class drawing power from unanticipated sources. They in turn would eventually be replaced for the same reasons, and so the cycle would continue onwards.

By this process, the bourgeois (the middle class) in Russia would, according to the theory, replace the aristocracy, and only once that had happened would

THE ROAD TO REVOLUTION

MAY 1896
Nicholas II is crowned Tsar, making clear he'll continue the autocratic rule of Alexander III.

JULY 1903
The Russian Social Democrat party splits into two factions: the Bolsheviks, under Lenin, and the Mensheviks.

JANUARY 1905
Tsarist troops open fire on demonstrators in Saint Petersburg, causing widespread strikes. June sees a mutiny aboard the battleship Potemkin.

OCTOBER 1905
Nicholas II ends the unrest by promising increased civil liberties for the proletariat. The Duma is formed.

JULY 1914
At the outbreak of war, Nicholas II assumes control of the Russian Army. His family come under the damaging influence of Rasputin.

FEBRUARY 1917
Protests turn to riots in Saint Petersburg. The city falls to insurgents; the Duma collapses into chaos.

MARCH-APRIL 1917
Nicholas II abdicates and the Provisional Government forms. Lenin returns and sets up a base in Saint Petersburg.

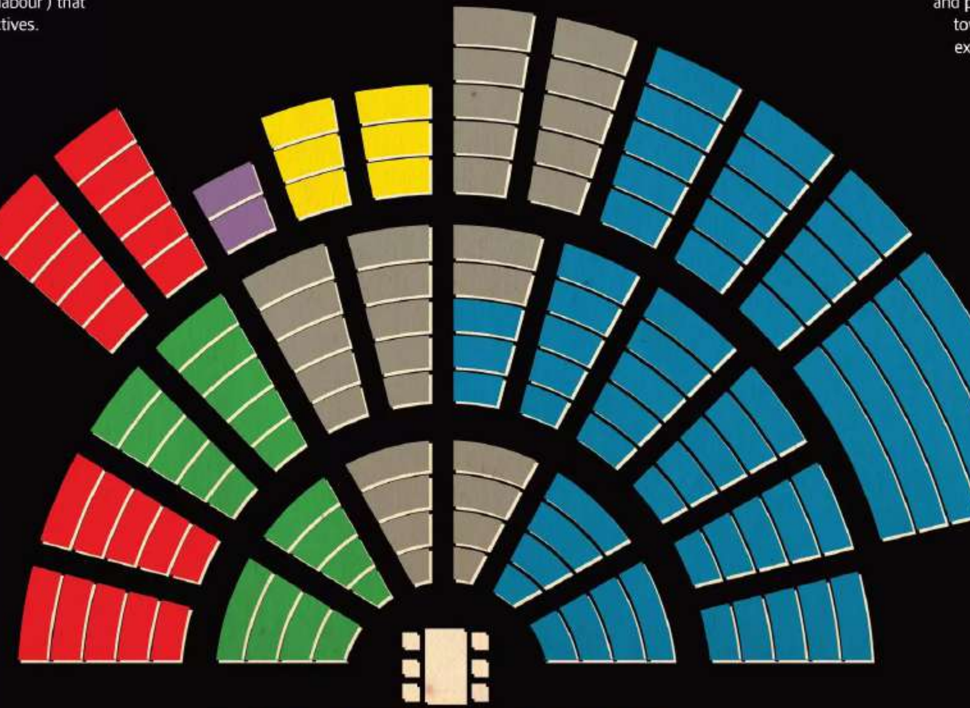
JULY 1917
Alexander Kerensky becomes prime minister of the government, but it remains largely powerless, lacking legitimisation.

OCTOBER 1917
Bolsheviks take Saint Petersburg and storm the Winter Palace. Lenin controls Russia.

NOVEMBER 1917
In elections, the Bolsheviks lose. Clever politicking from Lenin sees his party hold onto and consolidate power.

THE STATE DUMA

The Duma was instituted to represent the voices of working people in 1905. As Lenin launched his revolution, its seats were occupied as follows:



TRUDOVIKS - 10 SEATS
The Labour Group or 'Trudoviks' were a breakaway from the Socialist Revolutionaries, since the SR had refused to participate in the Duma. They were a moderate socialist party (the name 'Trudovik' meaning 'labour') that grew out of small worker collectives.

BOLSHEVIKS - 15 SEATS
Lenin's faction of the Russian Social Democratic Party was committed to the overthrow of the tsarist autocracy and the redistribution of power to the proletariat. Unlike the Mensheviks, the Bolsheviks still believed that a small ruling elite was necessary.

PROGRESSISTS - 41 SEATS
The Progressive Party consisted of moderate liberals who believed the time was right for the bourgeois, not the proletariat, to assume control of Russia. Two of the party's prominent members would go on to be part of the Provisional Government.

OCTOBRISTS - 95 SEATS
The Union of October 17 was a non-revolutionary conservative liberal party looking for compromise and co-operation between the government and public forces. They were working towards reforms to strengthen the existing order, not to overthrow it.

CONSTITUTIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY - 57 SEATS
Informally known as the 'Kadets', the Constitutional Democratic Party were liberals who had the support of professionals and academics. They were committed to workers' rights, through policies like the introduction of the eight-hour working day.

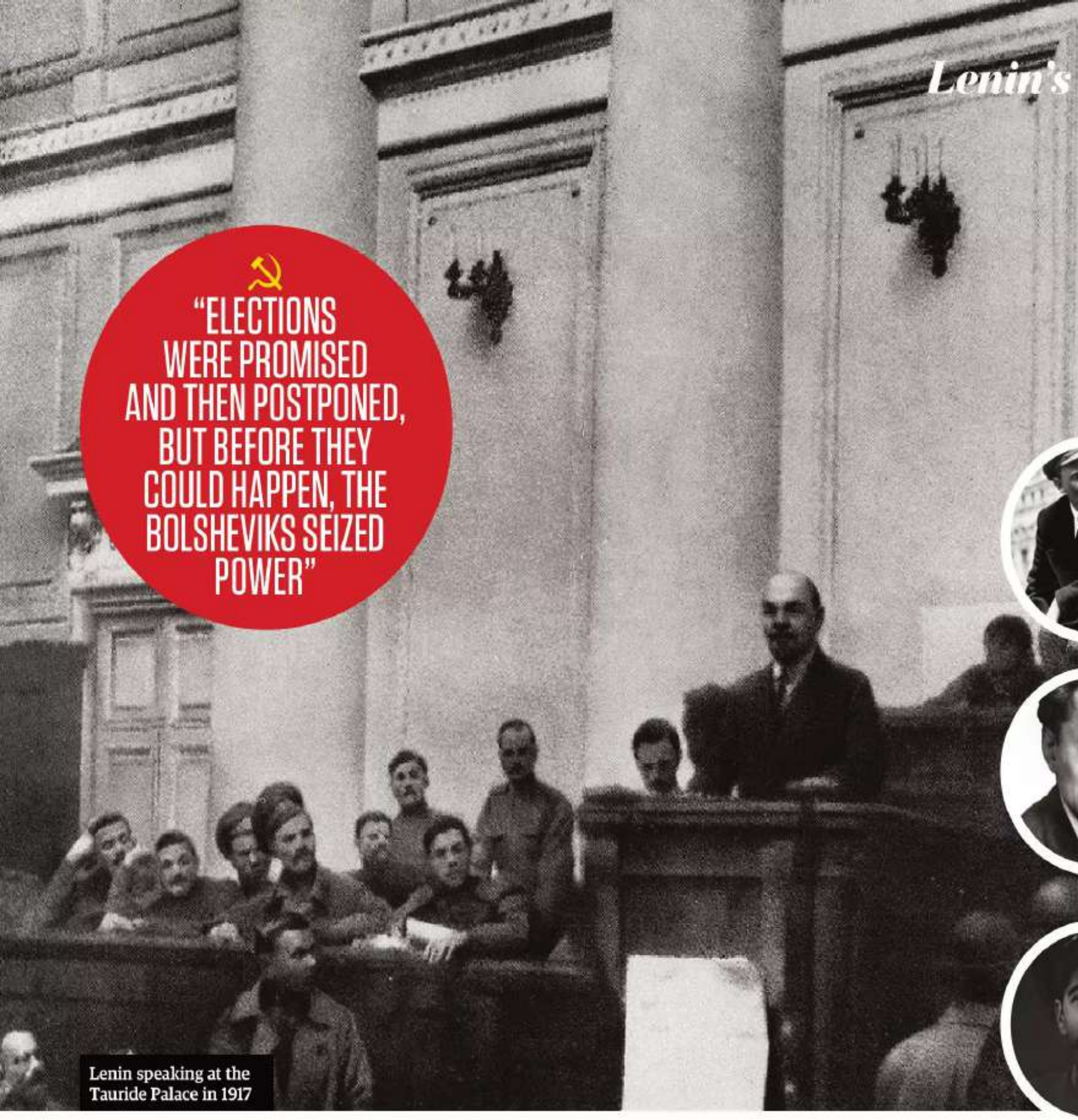
OTHERS (NON-RUSSIAN NATIONAL GROUPS, CENTRISTS, NATIONALISTS, RIGHTISTS) - 230

the proletariat (the working class) supersede the bourgeois in their own revolution. Rather than leaving these predicted events to work themselves out in their own time, however, various groups intent on forcing the process started to come into existence. The Social Revolutionary movement grew out of Populism, still intent on establishing a vast mass of worker cooperatives. But the Russian Social Democrats were the ones that really ran with Marx's theories. Finding that they couldn't quite agree even among themselves, the Social Democrats soon split into two factions: the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks. The key figure of the Mensheviks was Julius Tsederbaum, who would come to be known as Martov. Central to Bolshevism was Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov, later better known as Lenin. Martov believed in a grass-roots democracy where everyone had an equal voice. Lenin insisted on the necessity of a small intellectual elite controlling the revolution.

As it turned out, revolution first broke out organically in 1905 without either of them being directly responsible. On 9 January, a union of factory workers demonstrated outside the Winter Palace in Saint Petersburg and were fired on by the military, resulting in more than 100 deaths. A general strike followed; several officials were assassinated, including Tsar Nicholas II's uncle Grand Duke Sergei, the governor-general of Moscow; peasant revolts broke out in various provinces; and the crew of the battleship Potemkin mutinied. Tsar Nicholas was persuaded into the concession of forming a national parliament. This was divided into two houses, the Council of State (the upper house) and the Duma (the lower house), which would give the proletariat a represented, elected voice. But Nicholas stopped short of actually giving the Duma any power: its role, controversially, was to be purely consultative.

Some reforms were achieved. Health and education systems were put in place and laws were changed so that the peasantry could become landowners if they so chose - half of them did so by 1915. In-fighting between the Bolsheviks and Mensheviks continued during this time, with the former positing the idea that they should swap their underground status for a more public relationship with the now-legal trade unions, and the latter, viewing the bourgeois class as having been weakened by recent events, still pushing for a full proletarian overhaul of society.

Then, in 1914, came war, where inflation ran rampant in Russia, crippling taxes were imposed, and the peasantry were reduced to barely surviving at a level of subsistence farming. The Mensheviks largely supported Russia defending itself against Germany. The more radical Bolsheviks, fronted by the vocal Lenin, advocated flipping the situation into a civil war of the Russian proletariat against its own government, which, if successful, would evolve into a revolutionary war across Europe. Again, the Revolution of 1917 would initially see the various political factions scrambling to take ownership rather than leading from the front. General unrest suddenly led to major upheaval. On 23 February/8 March, thousands of female factory workers took to the streets of Saint Petersburg, nominally to mark Women's Day, until the tone shifted into chants demanding bread and mass singing of the French revolutionary anthem *La Marseillaise*. Three days later, rioting in Znamensky Square was met with gunfire from the Znamensky regiment, which caused several other regiments to find their soldiers mutinying in protest. The next day, Saint Petersburg fell to the insurgents, with



"ELECTIONS WERE PROMISED AND THEN POSTPONED, BUT BEFORE THEY COULD HAPPEN, THE BOLSHEVIKS SEIZED POWER"

Lenin speaking at the Tauride Palace in 1917

The Provisional Government in Petrograd, 1917

KEY FIGURES

BOLSHEVIKS

VLADIMIR LENIN

Leader of the Bolsheviks

The revolutionary thinker and politician steered Russia to communist revolution and was its premier from 1917 until his death from a stroke in 1924, aged 53. His body lay in state for four days and was viewed by almost a million mourners.

LEON TROTSKY

Chairman of the Revolutionary Committee

Initially a Menshevik, Trotsky joined the Bolsheviks for the 1917 revolution and was instrumental in its success. He was later expelled from the Communist Party and exiled for his opposition to Stalin. He was assassinated in 1940.

JOSEPH STALIN

Member of the Central Committee

A minor player in the 1917 Revolution, Stalin rose through Bolshevik ranks until he took leadership following Lenin's death. His rule turned Russia into an industrial power, but he was also responsible for the deaths of millions in the Gulags.

PROVISIONAL GOVERNMENT

PRINCE GEORGY LVOV

Minister President/Minister of the Interior

The first post-imperial prime minister of Russia, Lvov was the first head of the Provisional Government following Nicholas II's abdication. A veteran of the Duma, he failed to garner much support and resigned after just four months in position.

ALEXANDER KERENSKY

Minister of Justice/Minister of War and Navy/ Minister President

The Trudovik Kerensky took over the Provisional Government in July 1917. Unpopular with the military, he was deposed by the revolution. He fled and remained in exile until his death in 1970.

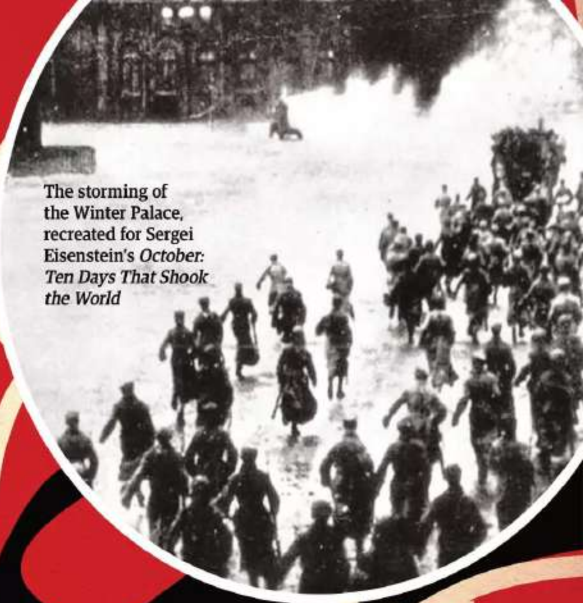
VIKTOR CHERNOV

Minister of Agriculture

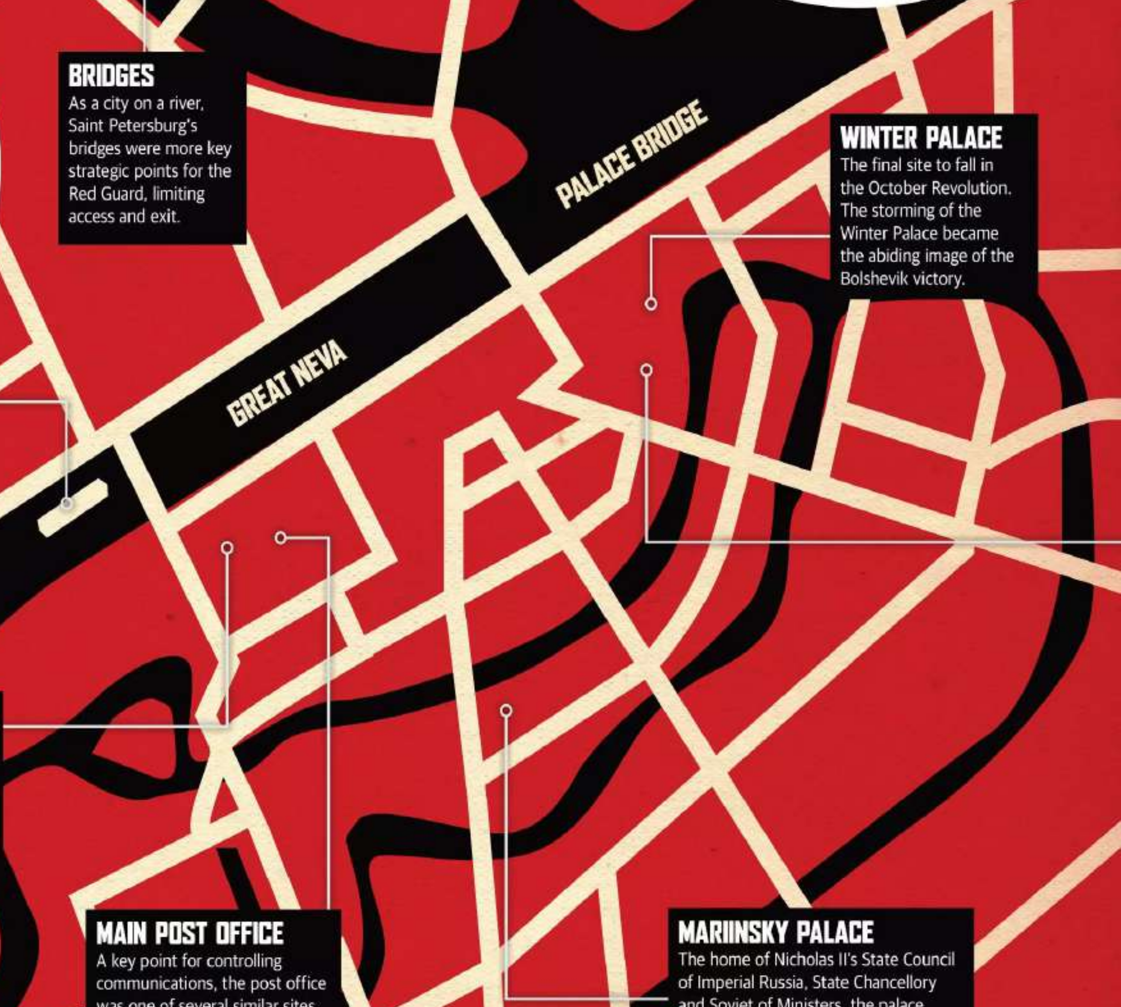
One of the founding members of the Russian Socialist-Revolutionaries, Chernov was a formidable political analyst - some called him the 'brain' of the party. Following the Bolsheviks' seizure of power he, like Kerensky, fled to Europe.

THE OCTOBER UPRISING

In October 1917, Lenin's Red Guard stormed the streets of Petrograd, taking over several strategic points



The storming of the Winter Palace, recreated for Sergei Eisenstein's *October: Ten Days That Shook the World*



BRIDGES

As a city on a river, Saint Petersburg's bridges were more key strategic points for the Red Guard, limiting access and exit.

WINTER PALACE

The final site to fall in the October Revolution. The storming of the Winter Palace became the abiding image of the Bolshevik victory.

AURORA

Anchored on Saint Petersburg's Bolshaya Neva River, the cruiser Aurora was the ship from which the revolutionary troops fired blank shots at the Winter Palace, terrorising the people inside.

CENTRAL TELEGRAPH

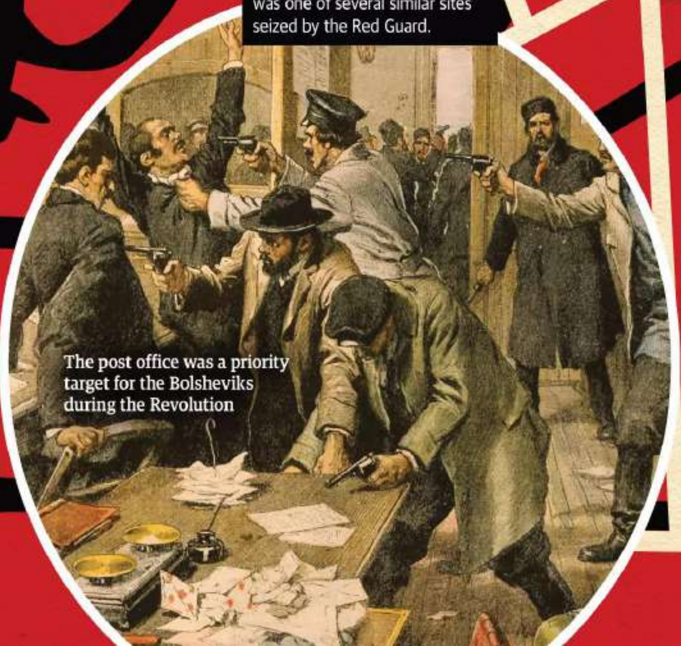
Like the post office, control of the Telegraph was of significant use to the Bolsheviks and the Red Guard, cutting off the opposition from any means of summoning help or reinforcement.

MAIN POST OFFICE

A key point for controlling communications, the post office was one of several similar sites seized by the Red Guard.

MARIINSKY PALACE

The home of Nicholas II's State Council of Imperial Russia, State Chancellory and Soviet of Ministers, the palace was given over to the Provisional Government in March 1917, and then to various Soviet ministries after October.



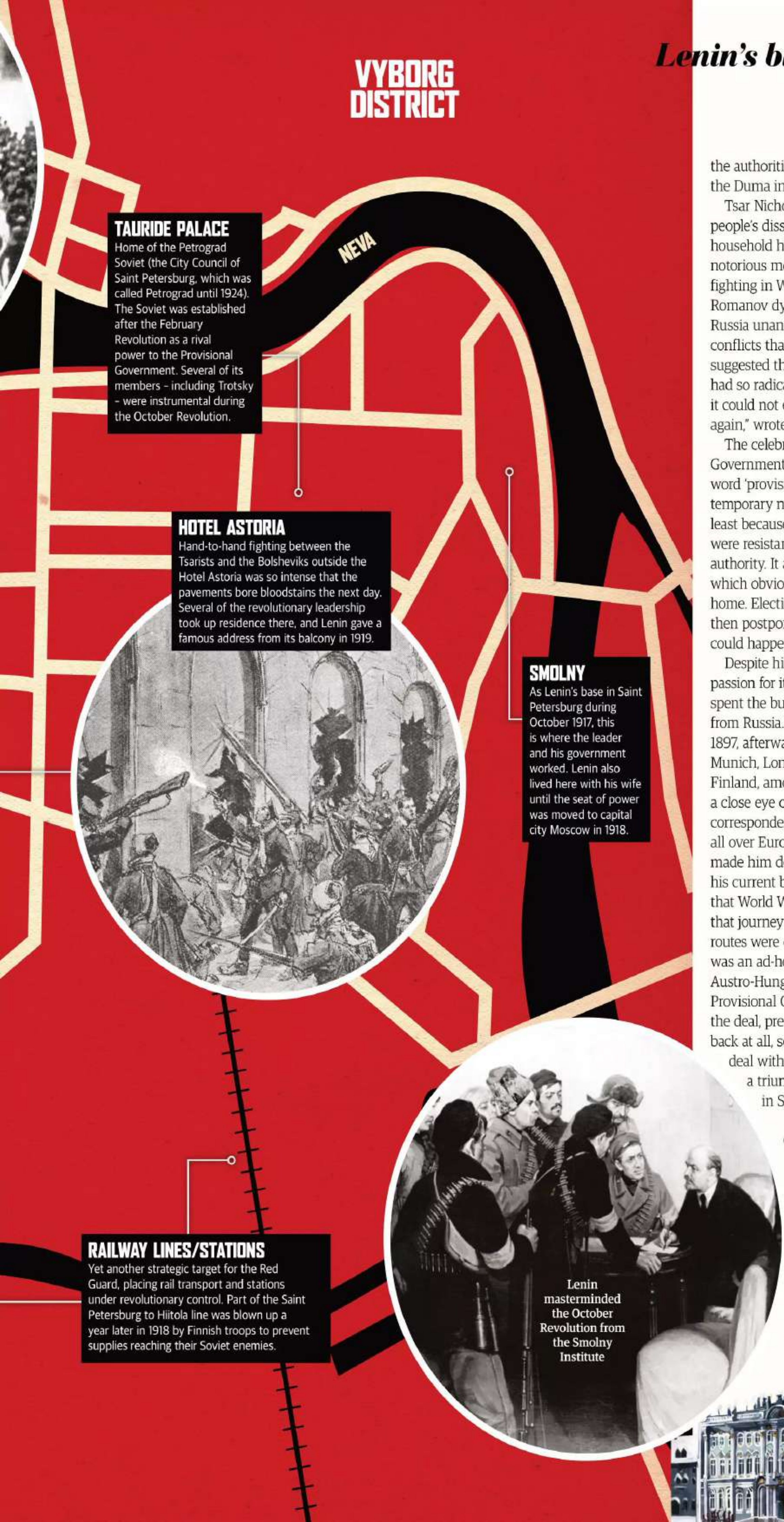
The post office was a priority target for the Bolsheviks during the Revolution the authorities retreating to the Winter Palace and the Duma in chaos.

Tsar Nicholas, long the figurehead for the people's dissatisfaction - it didn't help that his household had come under the malign influence of notorious monk Rasputin while Nicholas had been fighting in World War I - abdicated, ending the Romanov dynasty with extraordinary suddenness. Russia unanimously rejoiced, and in the civil conflicts that followed, no party or faction even suggested the monarchy's revival. "The country had so radically vomited up the monarchy that it could not ever crawl down the people's throat again," wrote the Social Democrat Leon Trotsky.

The celebrations were short lived. A Provisional Government was formed, but while the very word 'provisional' was intended to make clear its temporary nature, it struggled to keep order: not least because, having not been elected, the people were resistant to the idea that it wielded any authority. It also continued to fight in World War I, which obviously remained an unpopular policy at home. Elections were promised for September and then postponed until November, but before they could happen, the Bolsheviks seized power.

Despite his devotion to his homeland and his passion for its political struggles, Lenin had actually spent the bulk of the previous two decades away from Russia. Exiled to Siberia for three years in 1897, afterwards he spent itinerant periods in Munich, London, Paris, Sweden, Switzerland and Finland, among other places, all the time keeping a close eye on events at home and keeping up correspondence with his revolutionary comrades all over Europe. The unrest in February 1917 made him desperate to return to Russia from his current base in Switzerland, but the fact that World War I was raging around him made that journey problematic. Various adventurous routes were discussed, but the eventual solution was an ad-hoc exchange of Russian exiles for Austro-Hungarian prisoners of war. The Russian Provisional Government dragged their heels over the deal, presumably not sure they wanted Lenin back at all, so the impatient communists did the deal with Germany themselves. Lenin arrived to a triumphant reception at the Finland Station in Saint Petersburg in April 1917.

For Lenin, the timing was urgent. Over the next six months he deluged his Bolshevik Central Committee colleagues with arguments in favour of radical immediate action, and in October, the decision to seize power was made, with an alliance of Lenin and former Menshevik Trotsky, now the chairman of the predominantly Bolshevik Petrograd Soviet (meaning 'council'), at its vanguard. The Bolshevik takeover had begun.



TAURIDE PALACE
Home of the Petrograd Soviet (the City Council of Saint Petersburg, which was called Petrograd until 1924). The Soviet was established after the February Revolution as a rival power to the Provisional Government. Several of its members - including Trotsky - were instrumental during the October Revolution.

HOTEL ASTORIA
Hand-to-hand fighting between the Tsarists and the Bolsheviks outside the Hotel Astoria was so intense that the pavements bore bloodstains the next day. Several of the revolutionary leadership took up residence there, and Lenin gave a famous address from its balcony in 1919.

SMOLNY
As Lenin's base in Saint Petersburg during October 1917, this is where the leader and his government worked. Lenin also lived here with his wife until the seat of power was moved to capital city Moscow in 1918.

RAILWAY LINES/STATIONS
Yet another strategic target for the Red Guard, placing rail transport and stations under revolutionary control. Part of the Saint Petersburg to Hiitola line was blown up a year later in 1918 by Finnish troops to prevent supplies reaching their Soviet enemies.

Lenin masterminded the October Revolution from the Smolny Institute

SOVIET DECREES

In the seven years following the revolution in 1917, the new government issued dozens of legislative acts. They were known as decrees

DECREE ON PEACE

The document proposing the immediate withdrawal of Russia from World War I: a key Bolshevik policy since before the revolution.

DECREE ON LAND

Again, a central Bolshevik policy made law: private property was to be abolished and landed estates redistributed among the peasantry.

DECREE SOCIALIST HOMELAND IS IN DANGER!

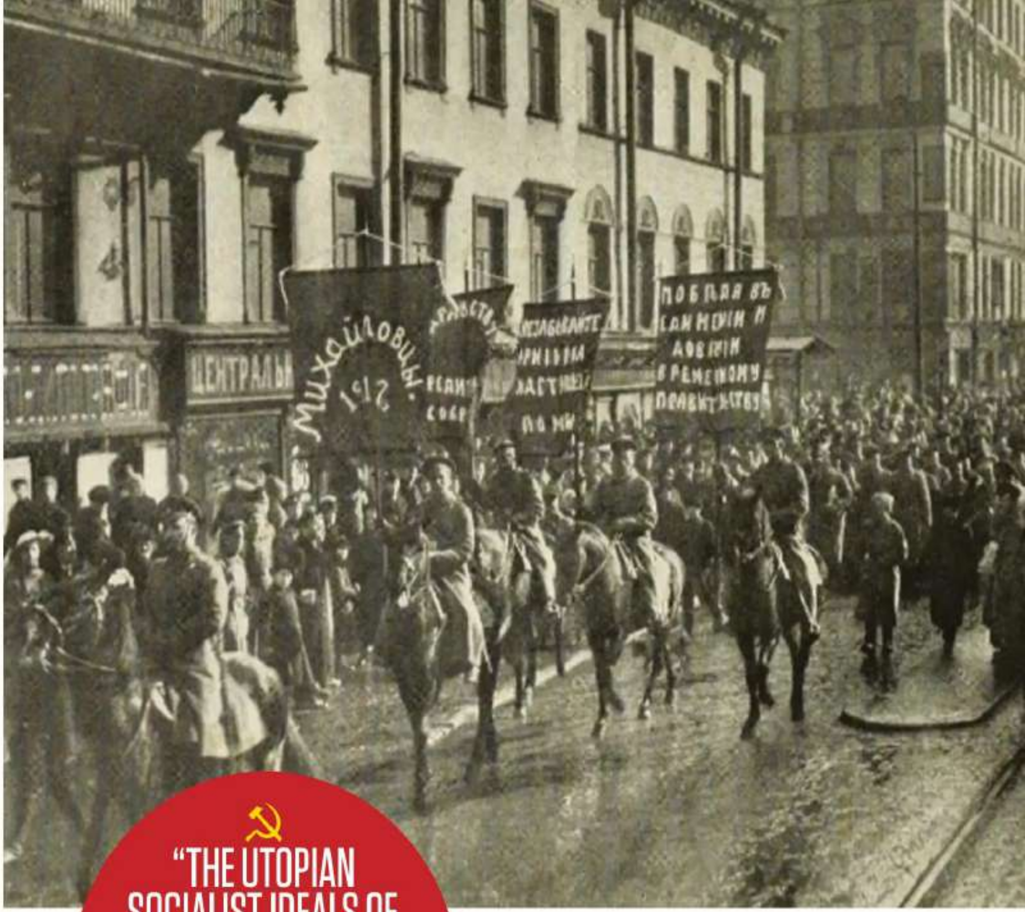
A call for peasant forces to mobilise in Russia's defence in the face of German advances. "Protect each position to the last drop of blood!" was the cry.

DECREE ON THE RED TERROR

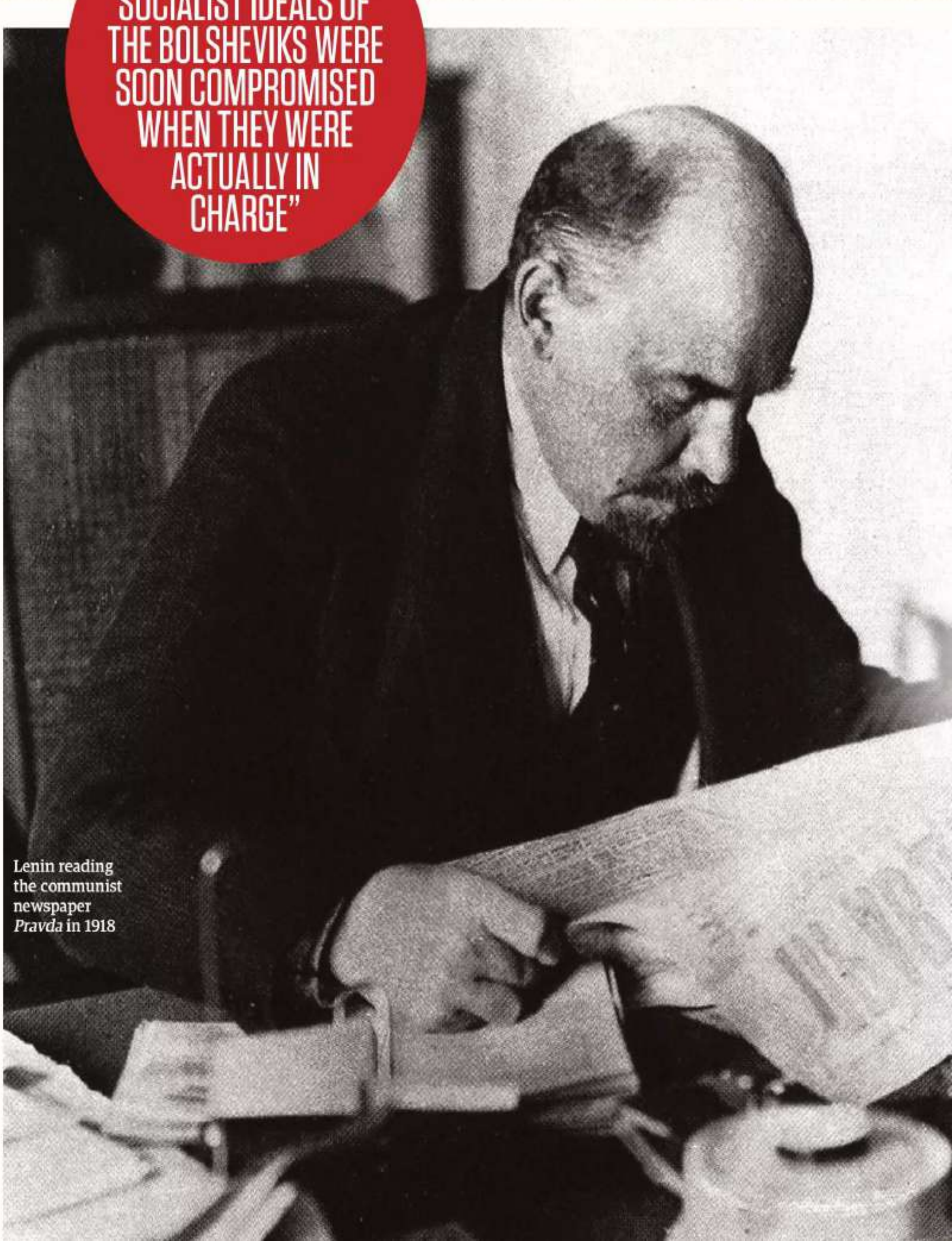
An appeal for workers to crush any signs of counter-revolution against the Bolsheviks. "Anyone who dares to spread the slightest rumour against the Soviet regime will be arrested immediately..."

DECREE ON THE INTRODUCTION OF TIME MEASUREMENT ACCORDING TO INTERNATIONAL TIME ZONE SYSTEM

Russia changed from the 'Old Style' Julian Calendar to the 'New Style' Gregorian system of much of the rest of the world in 1918. There's a few days' difference, meaning the October Revolution actually took place in November.



"THE UTOPIAN SOCIALIST IDEALS OF THE BOLSHEVIKS WERE SOON COMPROMISED WHEN THEY WERE ACTUALLY IN CHARGE"

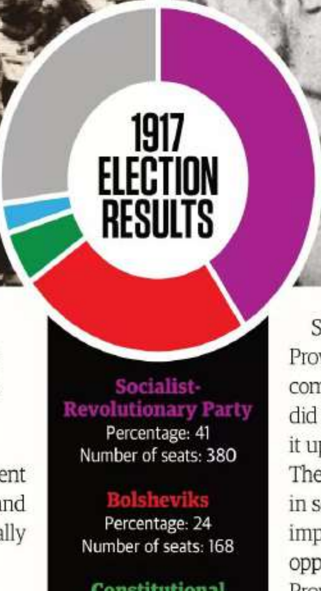


Lenin reading the communist newspaper *Pravda* in 1918

Совѣтъ Солдатскихъ Депутатовъ въ Государственной Думѣ

A session of the Petrograd Soviet in 1917

Nicholas II, not long after his abdication in 1917



Socialist-Revolutionary Party
Percentage: 41
Number of seats: 380

Bolsheviks
Percentage: 24
Number of seats: 168

Constitutional Democratic Party
Percentage: 5
Number of seats: 17

Mensheviks
Percentage: 3
Seats: 18

Others
Percentage: 27
Number of seats: 120

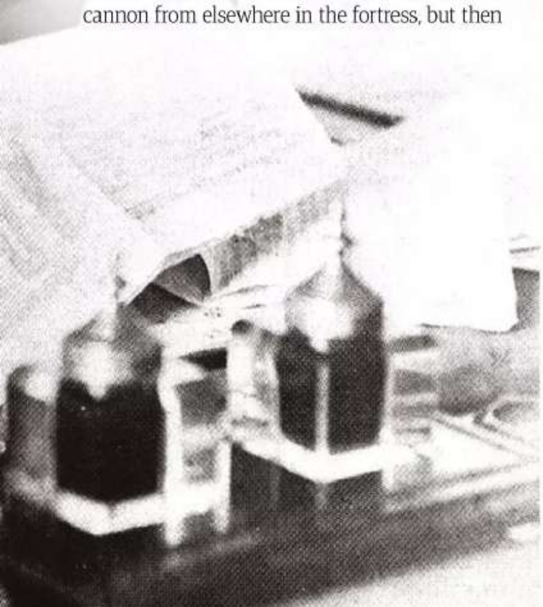
When the Provisional Government, led by the moderate-socialist Alexander Kerensky, ordered the shutting down of the Bolshevik printing presses as a prelude to an attack on the Petrograd Military Revolutionary Committee, the Bolsheviks' armed bands of proletariat workers, known as the Red Guard, retailiated by storming strategic points such as bridges, railway stations, telephone exchanges, post offices, the national bank and the Tauride Palace. Kerensky fled, having been unable to muster counter-troops in time. By the morning, the only site that hadn't fallen to the revolutionaries was the Winter Palace, the headquarters of the Provisional Government.

The 'Storming of the Winter Palace' has gone down as a famously dramatic moment in history, but it was actually a much more scrappy affair than portrayals like Sergei Eisenstein's classic film *October: Ten Days That Shook the World* have suggested. The revolutionary military had planned to begin the assault using heavy artillery from the nearby Peter and Paul Fortress, but the weapons there were rusty from disuse and wouldn't function. Soldiers brought up replacement cannon from elsewhere in the fortress, but then realised they didn't have the right shells to fire. The signal to attack, it had been agreed, would come from a red lantern raised on a flagpole, but during the event, a red lantern couldn't be found, and the soldier sent to look for one got lost in the dark and fell into a bog. The lamp he eventually brought back couldn't be attached to the pole and wasn't red anyway. Nobody that eventually participated in the attack even saw it. The chaos dragged the Winter Palace's downfall out to a tortuous 15 hours, when a more organised force could probably have achieved it in far less time.

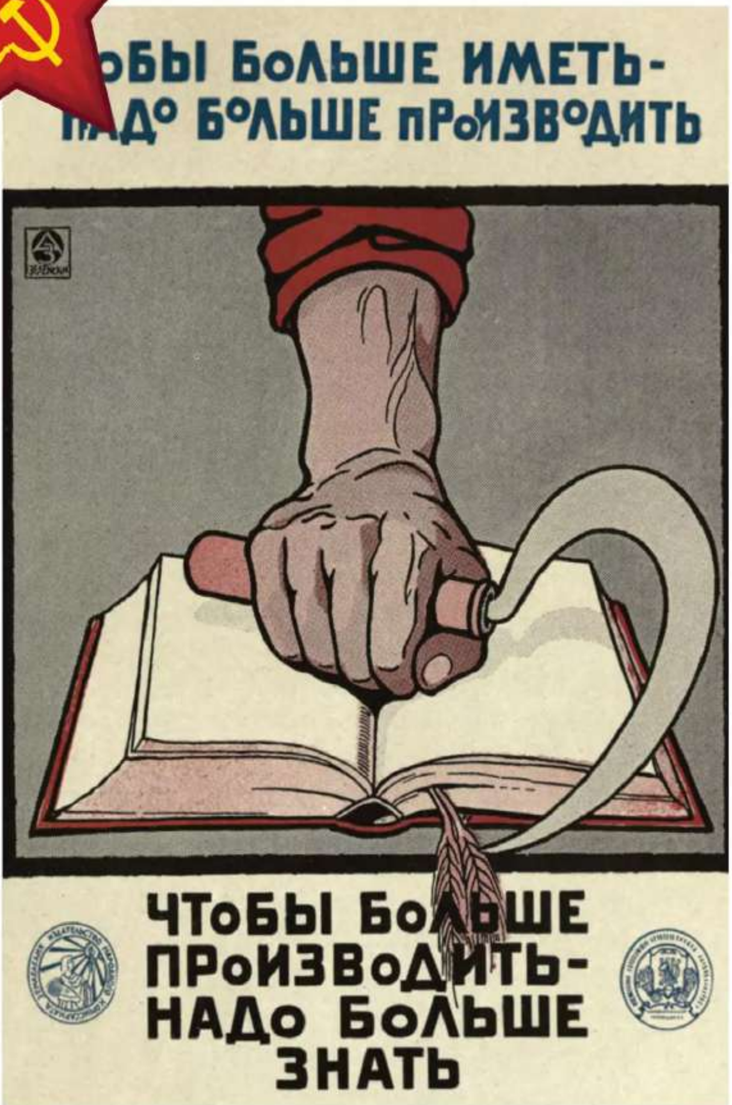
Luckily for the Bolshevik forces, the defence from within the Winter Palace was practically non-existent. The ministers inside were inexperienced in military matters, and the small number of troops defending them were becoming increasingly nervous the longer they waited for the Bolsheviks to breach the doors. Ammunition and food supplies for even a single evening were desperately low, and when the Bolsheviks began firing blank shots at the palace from the cruiser Aurora anchored on the Bolshaya Neva River, the soldiers mostly panicked and fled. Lenin appeared in public for the first time in months to proclaim that the Provisional Government had been overthrown, and that the time had finally come to "set about building a proletarian socialist state." The Bolshevik position was strengthened even further when the Mensheviks and the Social Revolutionaries walked out of the resultant talks, leaving Lenin and his comrades basically unopposed. "You are miserable bankrupts. You have played out your role," Trotsky said to those departing. "Go where you belong, into the dustbin of history."

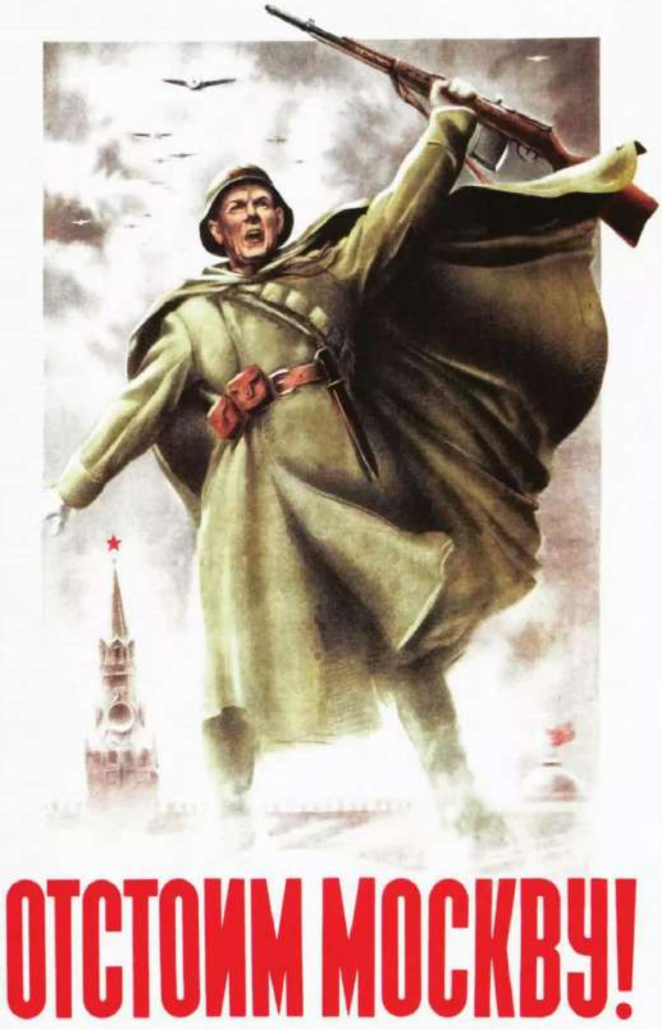
Such had been the state of the Provisional Government that, as one commentator put it, the Bolsheviks did not so much seize power as pick it up from where it had been dropped. The revolution has been called a coup in some circles, but the word 'coup' implies taking power from a strong opponent, where the power that the Provisional Government actually wielded was debatable. Essentially, there had been nobody actually 'running' Russia for the months since the abdication of the Tsar.

Sadly, however, the utopian socialist ideals of the Bolsheviks were soon compromised when they were actually in charge, with Lenin forced into compromises like the crippling Brest-Litovsk peace treaty with Germany, which lost Russia several of its provinces and deprived it of vast swathes of its agricultural and industrial resources. The Bolshevik ideology proved largely unworkable simply due to the practicalities of governance. Lenin ended up replacing one monolithic state with a different one, overruling the 'free' elections of November 1917 (in which the Socialist-Revolutionary Party won a significant majority of the votes) and announcing "the Dictatorship of the Proletariat" so that the Bolsheviks walked away with power anyway. Factional splits and civil war followed, as did the continuing oppression of the proletariat that Bolshevism had sought to liberate, the catastrophic famine of the 1930s and the horrific regime of the former Bolshevik Joseph Stalin. The flurry of ideas that had led to the Revolution had been, and for many is still, inspirational. The tragedy remains that the revolutionaries failed to live up to their own ideology.

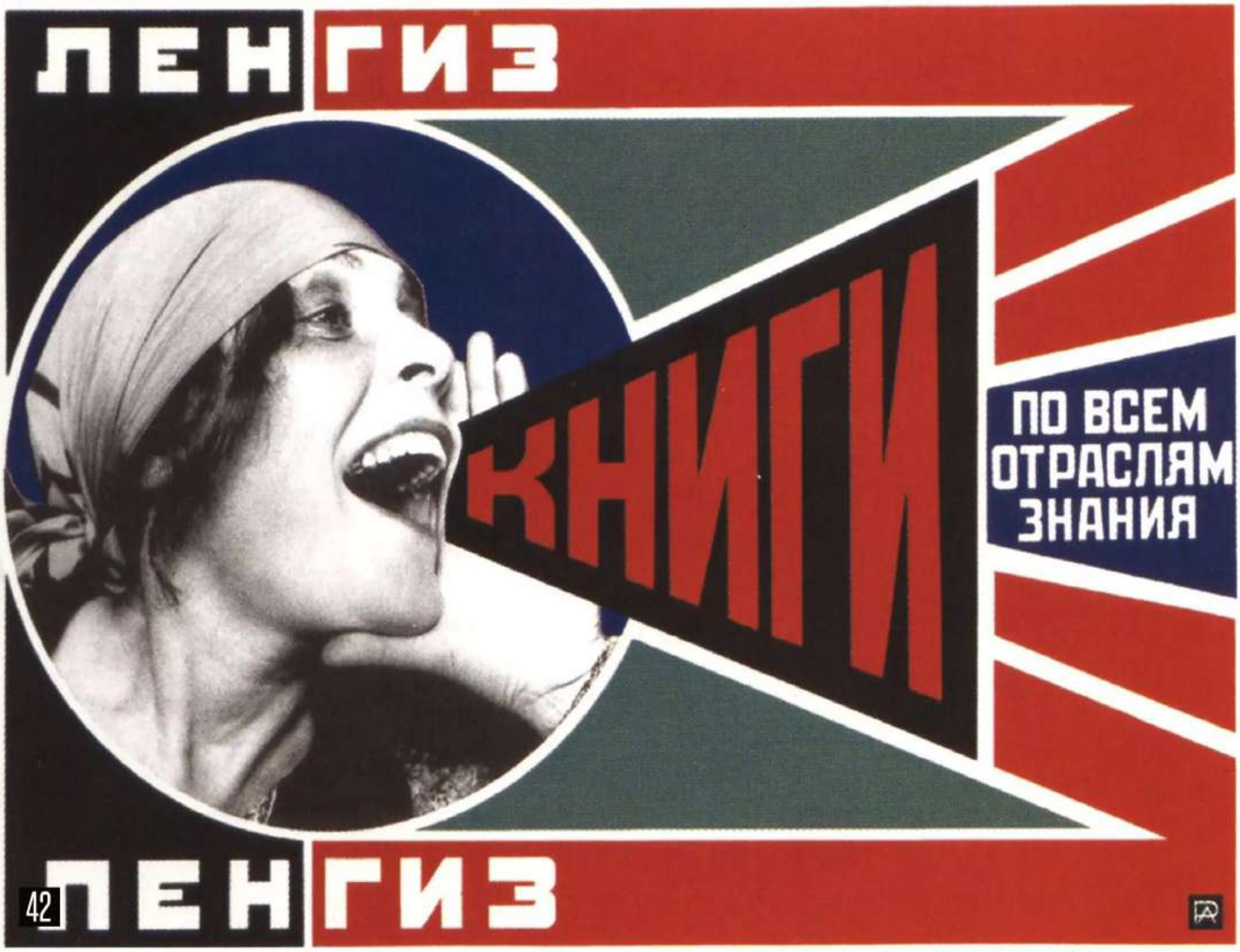


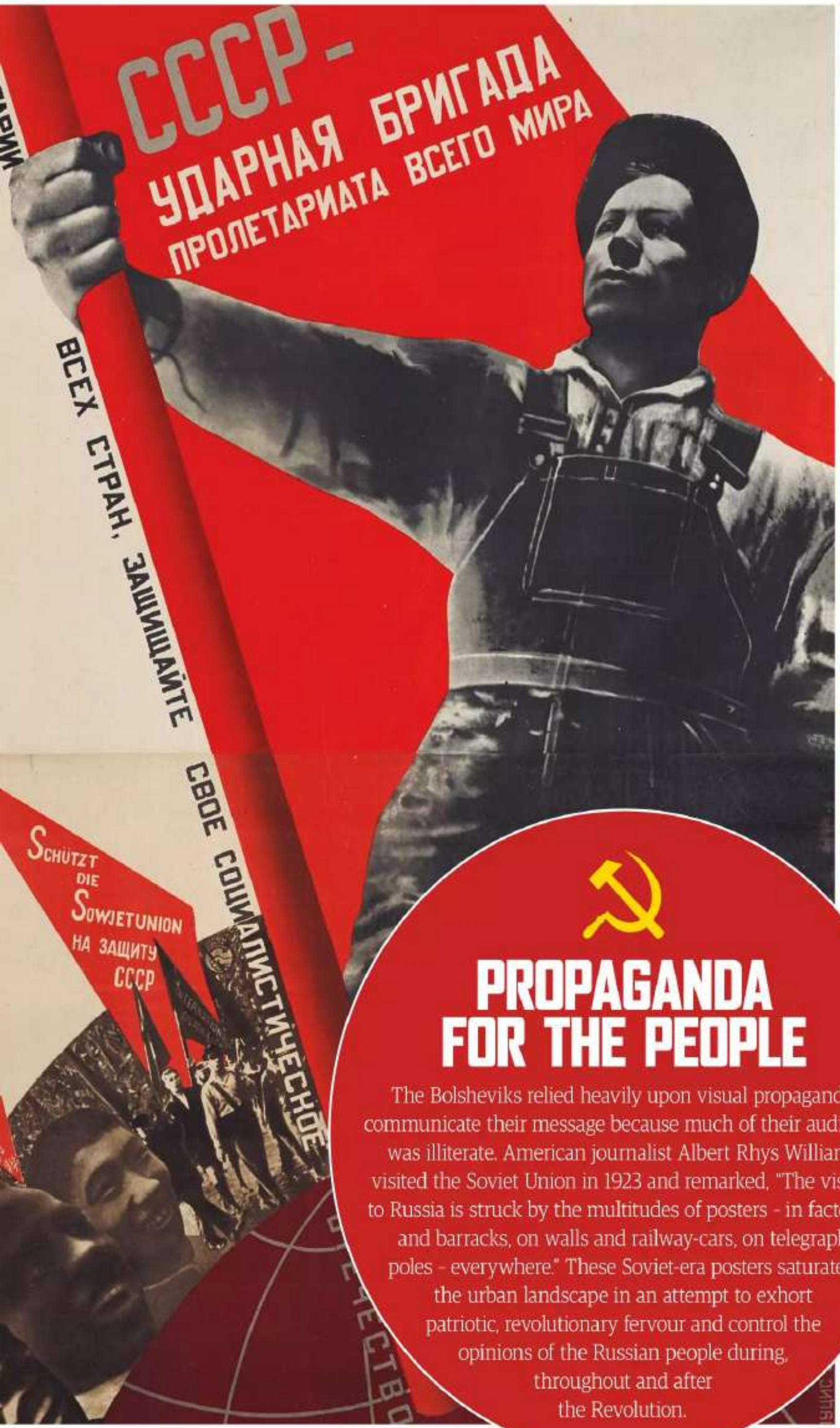
© Joe Cummings; Alamy; Rex Features

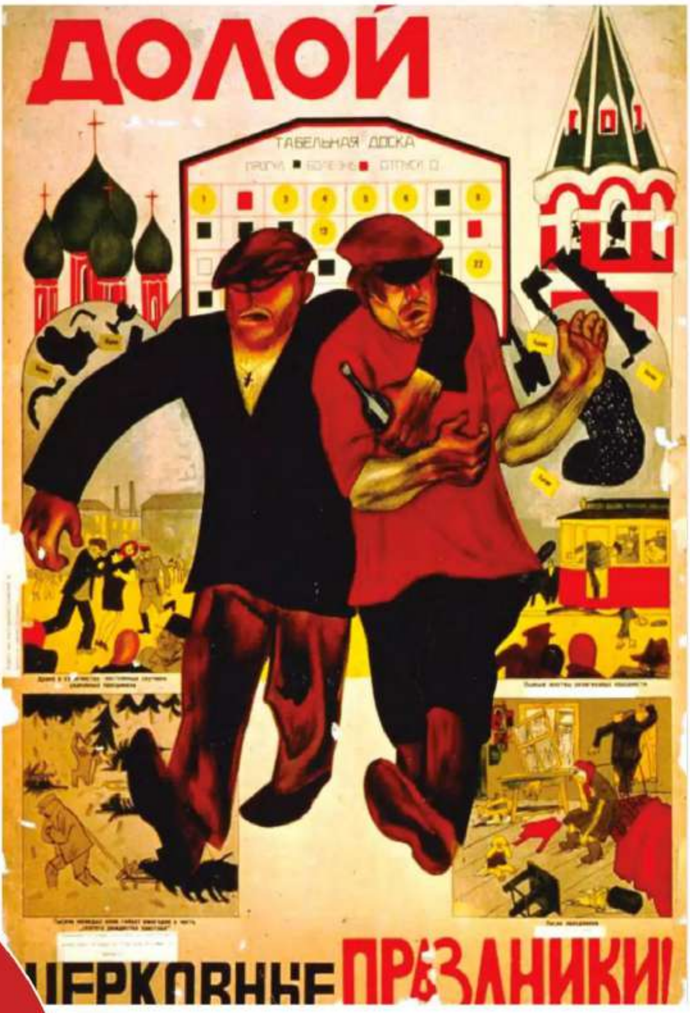

ОБЫ БОЛЬШЕ ИМЕТЬ-
НАДО БОЛЬШЕ ПРОИЗВОДИТЬ
ЧТОБЫ БОЛЬШЕ
ПРОИЗВОДИТЬ-
НАДО БОЛЬШЕ
ЗНАТЬ


ОТСТОИМ МОСКВУ!

ПРОЛЕТАР

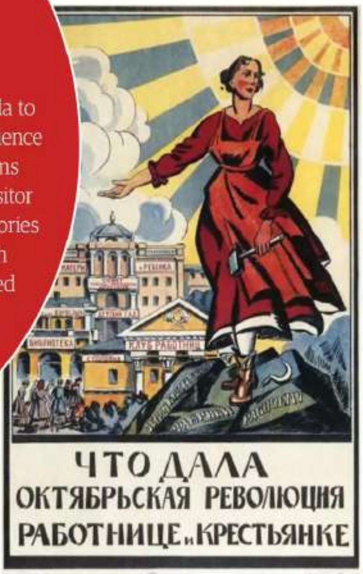

ЛЕНГИЗ
КНИГИ
ПО ВСЕМ
ОТРАСЛЯМ
ЗНАНИЯ
ЛЕНГИЗ

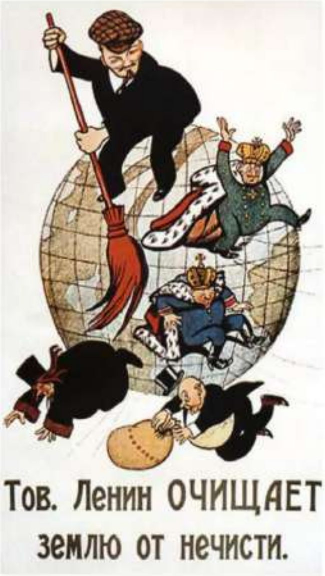

СССР -
УДАРНАЯ БРИГАДА
ПРОЛЕТАРИАТА ВСЕГО МИРА
ВСЕХ СТРАН, ЗАЩИЩАЙТЕ СВОЕ СОЦИАЛИСТИЧЕСКОЕ
SCHÜTZT DIE SOWJETUNION
НА ЗАЩИТУ СССР

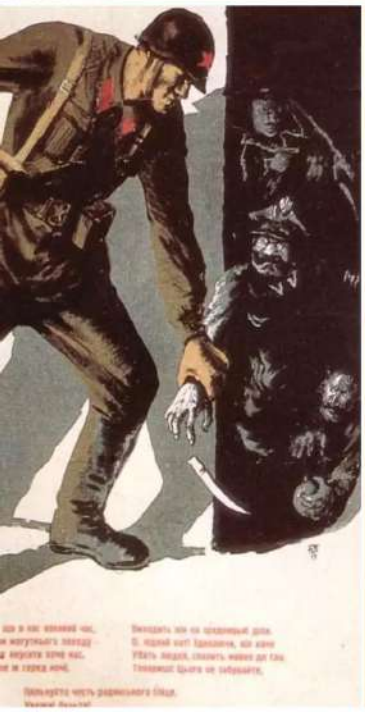

ДОЛОЙ
ТАБЕЛЬНАЯ ДОСКА
ЦЕРКОВНЫЕ ПРАЗДНИКИ!

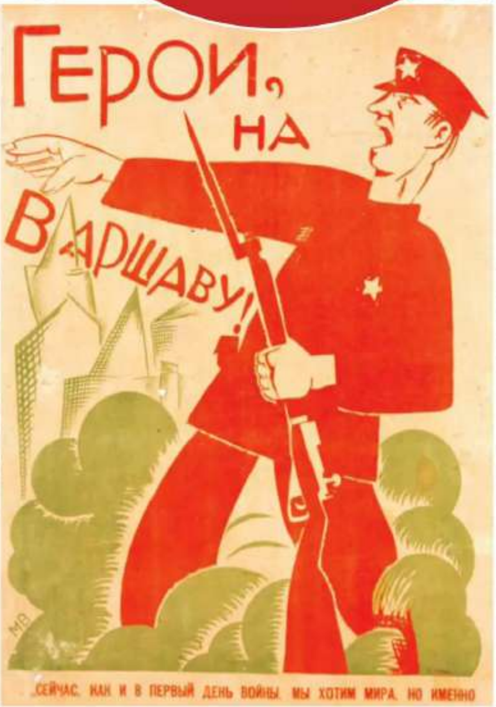
PROPAGANDA FOR THE PEOPLE

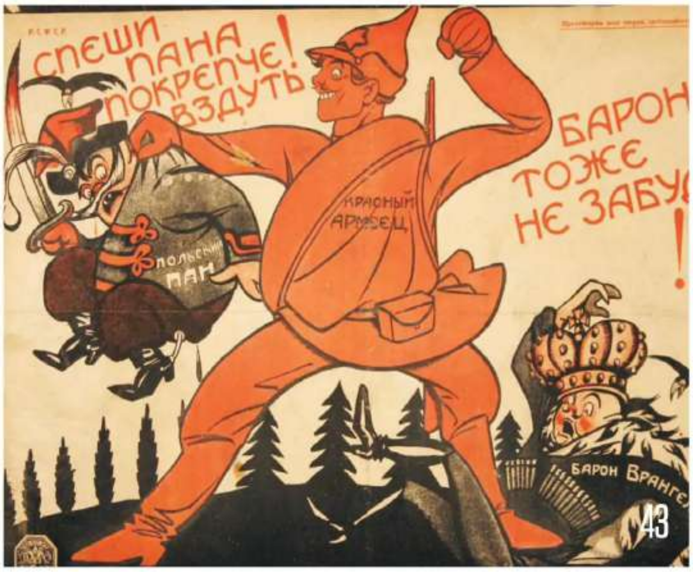
The Bolsheviks relied heavily upon visual propaganda to communicate their message because much of their audience was illiterate. American journalist Albert Rhys Williams visited the Soviet Union in 1923 and remarked, "The visitor to Russia is struck by the multitudes of posters - in factories and barracks, on walls and railway-cars, on telegraph poles - everywhere." These Soviet-era posters saturated the urban landscape in an attempt to exhort patriotic, revolutionary fervour and control the opinions of the Russian people during, throughout and after the Revolution.


ЧТО ДАЛА
ОКТЯБРЬСКАЯ РЕВОЛЮЦИЯ
РАБОТНИЦЕ и КРЕСТЬЯНКЕ


Тов. Ленин ОЧИЩАЕТ
землю от нечисти.




Герои,
на
Варшаву!
...СЕЙЧАС, КАК И В ПЕРВЫЙ ДЕНЬ ВОЙНЫ, МЫ ХОТИМ МИРА, НО ИМЕННО


РСФСР
спеши пана покрепче вздуть!
БАРОН ТОЖЕ НЕ ЗАБУ
КРАСНЫЙ АРМЕЕЦ
ПОЛЬСКИЙ ПАН
БАРОН ВРАНГЕ

Lenin and Trotsky (central and standing) photographed in 1921

THE REVOLUTION'S RIGHT-HAND MAN

Considered Lenin's intellectual superior by some, Leon Trotsky was pivotal to the revolution's success. Nevertheless, his fate was to be exile and murder

The pen in Lev Davidovich Bronstein's hand hovered above the paper. He needed to write a name on the travel permit, but as he was attempting to escape exile for revolutionary activities, entering his own name would have been ridiculous. Randomly, he thought about a jailer who had guarded him in an Odessa prison, prior to his exile. He entered the jailer's name. He had no inkling that it would stick, that he would be known as that for the rest of his life. The first name he put down was Leon, a variation of Lev. For the surname, he wrote Trotsky.

Some 22 years earlier, in November 1879, the Russian-Jewish Bronstein family's fifth child had entered the world in southern Ukraine. Aged eight, he was dispatched to relatives in Odessa to attend school. The bustling city was a stark contrast to his rural home and he thrived educationally and culturally. To complete his schooling and prepare for university, he moved to Nikolayev. There, he was introduced to Marxism.

A growing political awareness was fuelled when he met Franz Shvigovsky, a Czech intellectual who held informal gatherings at his home where radical ideas were discussed and exchanged. Bronstein began to devour serious and wide-ranging political literature. One of the group, a young woman named Alexandra Sokolovskaya, championed the emerging theories of Karl Marx and Bronstein later began to view Marxism as a viable means for change.

Dismaying his father, Bronstein abandoned thoughts of university and enthusiastically began to undermine the tsarist regime. Working with Sokolovskaya and others, he formed the South Russian Workers' Union, which agitated for better wages and conditions in local industries, when he was just a teenager. He wrote tracts and pamphlets to recruit members but the group was naïve about informers. The founders were arrested for revolutionary activity in January 1898.

Following months of isolation in different prisons, Bronstein was transferred to a jail in Odessa, where he could at least read and broaden his knowledge of Marxism. Almost two years later, he was sentenced without trial to four years' exile in Siberia along with Sokolovskaya. A spell in a transit prison in Moscow followed, where he first heard about Lenin, and he married Sokolovskaya.

> **"WHILE THEY ARGUED, A REVOLUTION STARTED WITHOUT THEM IN 1905 AS RUSSIAN WORKERS DEMONSTRATING AT SAINT PETERSBURG'S WINTER PALACE WERE SHOT DEAD"**

In Siberia, they were billeted in a village called Ust-Kot. It was a desolate place, feverishly hot in summer and many degrees below zero in winter. As such, and given its vast distance from the main Russian population centres, the tsarist regime committed few resources to suppressing revolutionary discussion. All manner of exiled dissidents travelled along the river to meet, debate, and distribute smuggled pamphlets and literature. Eventually, Lenin's publication, What is to be Done?, and issues of Iskra, a Marxist newspaper, reached the village.

Bronstein himself had begun writing for an Irkutsk newspaper, Vostochnoe Obozrenie ('Eastern Review'). He was quickly recognised as a talented contributor of well-crafted prose, ironic and sarcastic by turns, subtly including political commentary. He had formed the view that a centralised party was needed to coordinate revolutionary activity and when he read that Lenin was advocating something similar, he resolved to join him.

As someone who found sentimentality abhorrent, and claiming in any case that his wife encouraged him to leave, Trotsky, as he had now become, had no hesitation in abandoning her and their two young daughters to scurry west. He reached London and began to write for Iskra.

Trotsky was developing into an intellectual powerhouse and was never afraid to show it, even disagreeing with Lenin. He supported the Menshevik view of a democratic road to socialism against Lenin's standpoint that a controlling elite of dedicated revolutionaries should retain authority.

While they argued, a revolution started without them in 1905 as Russian workers demonstrating at Saint Petersburg's Winter Palace were shot dead. A general strike ensued and the crew of the battleship Potemkin mutinied. Trotsky, by then married to his second wife, Natalia Sedova, hurried home. Impressing with his energy and intellect, he quickly rose to prominence in the Saint Petersburg Soviet, or workers' council, demanding radical reforms. But the Tsar's concessions to the people, like the creation of the Duma weakened the opposition's resolve and the revolt was suppressed. Trotsky was arrested, tried and given a second Siberian exile.

There he wrote Results and Prospects, outlining his theory of permanent revolution, before once again escaping west. For income, Trotsky returned to journalism, expertly covering the Yugoslav Wars of 1912-13 as a war correspondent. Like Lenin, he opposed World War I, but this led to his expulsion from several European countries. As 1917 dawned, he was in New York.

Within months, Tsar Nicholas II had abdicated and Trotsky viewed the turmoil as the beginning of his predicted permanent revolution. He was back in Saint Petersburg, now called Petrograd, by mid-May and his differences with Lenin were narrowing. The Bolsheviks had at first supported the Provisional Government that took power after the abdication. But in his April Theses, Lenin argued that his party should end that support and break with the Mensheviks to stop Russia's participation in the war and reorganise the country along socialist principles. Previously a Menshevik, Trotsky drifted from the faction because of its war position. He joined Lenin in July.

They were a formidable alliance: Lenin in the background, guiding, planning and organising; Trotsky visible and energetic, rallying and rousing support from workers, soldiers and sailors with fiery oratory. Once Lenin resurfaced and prompted the Bolsheviks to seize power, Trotsky swiftly became commissar for foreign affairs.

As such, seeking the promised end of war, an armistice with Germany was arranged to allow peace talks. To encourage the expected revolutions elsewhere in Europe, Trotsky released details of secret treaties agreed by the tsarist regime with Britain and France, revealing how a defeated Germany would be divided between them. Yet no further uprisings occurred and though he used stalling tactics during the negotiations, Germany lost patience and threatened Petrograd. This led to the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, which brought peace but surrendered key lands to the aggressors.

Few believed Germany would actually adhere to the treaty, while Lenin's Russia faced civil war from counter-revolutionary forces. A Red Army was needed to defend what had been gained and Trotsky was tasked with creating it, now becoming people's commissar for military affairs. He instigated mass conscription to provide immense manpower and recruited legions of former tsarist officers for leadership. He demanded extreme discipline to counter cowardice and desertions, assessing front lines and boosting morale by travelling thousands of miles aboard his armoured train. The opposition White Army was defeated and the civil war won.

Unofficially Lenin's deputy in what had been renamed the Communist Party, Trotsky never courted support from members, often browbeating those who disagreed with him. This intellectual arrogance counted heavily against him when Lenin fell ill in the early 1920s. By contrast, Joseph Stalin, as secretary, had placed beholden supporters in prominent positions, building a powerbase. When Lenin died, Stalin's loyalists ensured that he, and not Trotsky, took the leadership.

Trotsky challenged Stalin on issues of party democracy and economic planning, but was denounced as a factionist and opportunist. The writing was on the wall. Expulsion from the party was followed by yet another exile, then banishment from the country in 1929. A number of literary works followed, many highly critical of Stalin.

With war looming in Europe, Trotsky arrived in Mexico in 1937, staying with artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. At the same time in Russia, orchestrated show trials accusing Trotsky of treason were taking place. Determined to silence his former comrade, Stalin sent agents to eliminate him. Ramón Mercader, a Spanish communist, succeeded, murdering Trotsky with an ice pick in August 1940. One of the Revolution's heroes was no more.

BRONSTEIN TO TROTSKY TO SNOWBALL

Revolutionary Russia had a veritable farmyard of characters to inspire Orwell

In *Animal Farm*, George Orwell's 1945 allegorical account of the Russian Revolution and its subsequent totalitarian regime, pigs portray the key players. Old Major, a boar, is an amalgam of Marx and Lenin. Napoleon, a Berkshire pig, represents Stalin. Snowball, a commonly generic pink pig, reflects Trotsky's personality and history.

Orwell, a democratic socialist, had some sympathy with Old Major's vision, while the characterisation of Snowball as a rousing orator who fights determinedly during conflicts is quite positive when compared to other animals. Ultimately, Napoleon brands Snowball a traitor and banishes him from the farm, mirroring Trotsky's denunciation and exile. It was Orwell's deep mistrust of Stalin, originating in part when he fought alongside communists during the Spanish Civil War, which prompted him to create the fable to highlight the corrupting nature of power.

ANIMAL FARM

Lenin's Politburo loyalists in 1925, from left to right: Stalin, Rykov, Kamenev and Zinoviev

THE RISE OF STALIN

Dismissed by Trotsky as a "mediocrity" driven by "intellectual inferiority," how did Stalin emerge from the shadow of Lenin and seize absolute power?

WORDS: JAMES HOARE

The Bolsheviks may have emerged victorious from the Russian Civil War, but Lenin didn't feel like a winner.

In the aftermath of the war he had been forced to backpedal on the planned economy by allowing individual capitalism under the guise of the New Economic Policy. This allowed peasants to take care of themselves and put the nation back on its feet. Things started to look up until the 1921-23 famine struck, killing an estimated 5 to 7 million people, and affecting millions more.

Lenin's health was declining too, and in 1921 he had begun to suffer headaches, paralytic episodes and slurred speech, forcing him to spend long spells at his densely wooded estate at Gorki. He confessed to his bamboozled physicians that "his song had been sung, his role played, and he needed to pass on his cause to someone."

Lenin had never been a well man; he had endured influenza, typhoid, and a skin condition called erysipelas. He had been frequently plagued by migraines and blackouts, and at one point during the Civil War had slumped against a tree complaining of "pins and needles".

He was forced to ease off on affairs of state, but the government had only functioned through his careful marshalling and manipulation of its opposing forces. He needed an equilibrium that would endure even if he were not there to pull the levers of power.

Lev 'Leon' Trotsky, the great hero of the Civil War and People's Commissar of Military and Naval Affairs, was the only senior Bolshevik with the followers, the prestige, and the leadership qualities to challenge Lenin. But he didn't play well with others, and so Lenin carefully manoeuvered his own loyalists into a majority, parachuting Stalin into the newly fashioned role of General Secretary of the Central Committee.

Stalin joined the double act of Lev Kamenev and Grigory Zinoviev (the more senior of the two) as the Troika, Lenin's most ardent acolytes on the Politburo, and Trotsky's most implacable foes.

The Central Committee was the day-to-day governing body of the Soviet Federation, with policy living and dying at the vote of its shifting roster. From the Central Committee, members were elected to the Secretariat, which ran the party itself, and the Politburo, an executive of seven full members and three non-voting candidate members responsible for the drafting of policy.

The ultimate ruling body was the Party Congress, which met every few years so that hundreds of delegates representing the entire party membership

THE DEATH OF LENIN

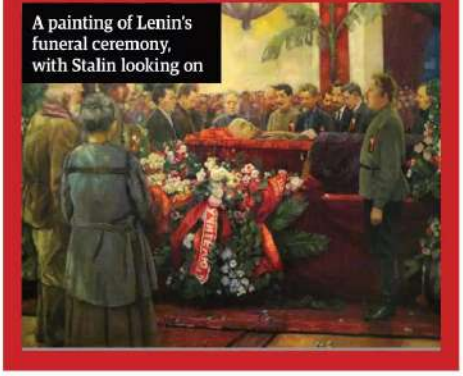
With Trotsky out of town, Stalin was quick to seize a propaganda victory

Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov 'Lenin' died at 6.50pm on 21 January 1924. In Moscow, Stalin took the call from Lenin's sister, and the senior Bolsheviks made haste for the estate at Gorki. Bukharin was already on site. Trotsky was missing; he was ill and en route to the warm breezes of the Black Sea coast.

Stalin was first into the room, clutching Lenin's head to his bosom theatrically, followed by Zinoviev, Kamenev and Bukharin. The next day, as the leadership discussed the funeral, an autopsy revealed that the arteries in Lenin's brain had been clogged with fatty tissue. Pressure had built and then finally it had burst. This, affecting the part of the brain that controlled respiration, is what had killed him.

On 22 January, Trotsky's train was stopped at Tbilisi and a breathless messenger informed him that Lenin had died and that the funeral would be held on 26 January. Trotsky had no chance of retracing the 1,000 miles back to Moscow in time.

Later, he discovered the funeral had been postponed by a day. Stalin had lied to him. The crowds, the international press, even Trotsky's own son had expected him to be there to steal the show. "I should have come at any price," he later rued.



A painting of Lenin's funeral ceremony, with Stalin looking on

"ALTHOUGH HE WAS TECHNICALLY AN OLD BOLSHEVIK, STALIN SAW MORE OF HIMSELF IN THE UPSTARTS FROM THE PROVINCES THAN HE DID IN THE OLD MEN OF LETTERS"

could approve or condemn the decisions of the Central Committee.

As General Secretary, Stalin was plugged into the vast bureaucratic engine at the heart of the party, and - crucially - held a number of vital functions that would enable him to starting manipulating the delicate power politics at the heart of the Bolshevik leadership. Chiefly, he was able to set the agenda for Politburo meetings, and he had responsibility for resolving personal disputes.

Stalin also controlled appointments under the vast nomenklatura system that rewarded party loyalists with cushy jobs, and zealously defended this right down to the level of most remote branch office. Another vital tool in building his own personal power base was the Business Directorate, whose primary function was the allocation of budget to the correct local party functionaries, but was also responsible for the distribution of cars, apartments, dachas, and foreign travel.

Using his new influence, Stalin began to draw followers into his orbit, preferring younger Bolsheviks, the uneducated working class 'children of the revolution' and especially those from the Caucasus over the predominantly Russian Old Bolsheviks who had joined the party before 1905. Although technically an Old Bolshevik, Stalin saw more of himself in the upstarts from the provinces than in the old men of letters.

Stalin took to these bureaucratic tasks with surprising vim for a man of action, and his assistant Amaiak Nazaretian wrote admiringly in 1922 that "...he's really cunning. Hard as a nut, it takes a while to understand what he's up to."

Following Lenin's first stroke in May 1922, the anti-Trotsky faction had leveraged their majority in the Central Committee and were running the show. Becoming acutely aware that the bloc he had set up to isolate Trotsky was accumulating dangerous levels of power, Lenin sought to claim a scalp to reassert his own authority, and perhaps to ease his feelings of frailty and irrelevance.

As Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars, he wielded power through personal influence rather than dedicated departments, and removed from the Kremlin, he was at the mercy of his visitors. He had few close friends, but Stalin visited him 12 times at Gorki - more than any other minister - and Lenin's sister Maria Ulyanova recalled them reducing each other to fits of laughter with impersonations of their Bolshevik peers. Trotsky, by contrast, never visited Gorki, despite being invited many times.

In September 1922, a minor disagreement made Stalin a target. In a debate over the final constitutional settlement of the new Bolshevik state, Stalin proposed incorporating all the republics directly into the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic with some token autonomy. Lenin rejected this, preferring a 'Soviet Union' of 'independent' republics. The end result was exactly the same, so the argument was essentially about what lie they were telling on paper.

While Lenin's frustration with Trotsky had simmered for decades, this new enmity was suddenly unloaded without warning. Stalin, bruised by a very public rebuke from his mentor, backed down.

Stalin and Sergo Ordzhonikidze (in the white shirt) - partners in crime in the Georgian Affair

Leon Trotsky, photographed in 1925, the year he was removed from his precious Commissariat of Military and Naval Affairs by the centrists

Lenin's funeral procession gathers in Moscow's Red Square

Another opportunity to put Stalin in his place arose in October, when Stalin voted with the majority of the Central Committee to loosen the monopoly on foreign trade, which was currently conducted by the Commissariat of Foreign Trade to ensure no Soviet citizen had any direct exposure to foreign capitalists and their filthy lucre. This seemed like a logical extension of the New Economic Policy and would give the struggling post-Civil War economy another boost, but Lenin went in hard against it.

In doing so he joined forces with Trotsky, whose hardline position was to radically extend rather than relax state control of the economy, and Lenin spurred his rival into speaking out against the liberalisers. For Stalin - whose devotion to Lenin was without question - this humiliation wounded him to his core.

Trotsky would later claim in his memoirs that this was evidence of a lasting reconciliation on Lenin's part, a sort of "deathbed conversion" to his cause. Lenin's letters to Trotsky tell a different story, dwelling on their ideological differences as much as it did on the shared defence of the trade monopoly.

Despite his hurt feelings, Stalin reached out to his old friend through Lenin's sister Maria Ulyanova, telling her "I love him with all my heart, find a way to tell him that." Lenin refused to reciprocate this tender missive.

The next flashpoint between the two came with the 'Georgian Affair'. Local party feuds were a cottage industry, but Lenin saw opportunity in complaints from the Georgian Bolshevik leaders that Sergo Ordzhonikidze, the head of the Transcaucasian SFSR (Georgian, Armenia and Azerbaijan), was being too heavy handed. (Literally heavy handed, Ordzhonikidze had struck an opponent during a particularly tense exchange.)

Specifically they wanted Georgia to be its own "independent" Soviet Socialist Republic, whereas Ordzhonikidze and his old friend Stalin had overseen the shotgun wedding of the three territories on the principle that nationalism was incompatible with socialism.

Lenin reached out to Trotsky again and the two planned to coordinate another public broadside at the 12th Party Congress in April 1923. Lenin was determined to keep the Georgian Affair going and wrote a letter of support to the Georgian Bolshevik leadership, sending copies to Trotsky and Kamenev, the latter of whom was instructed to deliver it to Georgia in person and thereby drive a wedge between the Troika. Kamenev wrote to Zinoviev to caution that Lenin's real goal was "certain organisational expulsions at the top."

Lenin's letter to the Georgians would be his final official correspondence. On the night of 15 December he suffered a series of small strokes. "His condition has worsened," recorded his medical team. "He can write with difficulty, but what he writes is illegible."

The Politburo kicked the Georgian Affair into the long grass despite Trotsky's refusal to shut up about it. Although clearly dying, Lenin had one last card to play. On 24 December he dictated an open letter for the Party Congress, later known by Trotskyites as the Testament, although its veracity has been subject to much doubt.

In the 600-word letter, Lenin made his views on the current party leadership clear. He noted of Stalin that "having become Secretary General, has unlimited authority concentrated in his hands, and I am not sure whether he will always be capable of using that authority with sufficient caution."

Lenin then added of Trotsky that his recent defence of the trade monopoly showed him to be of "outstanding ability," adding that if left to their own devices the party would find itself split between him and Stalin.

In view of Lenin's worsening health, the Central Committee voted to make Stalin, as General Secretary, personally responsible for controlling Lenin's involvement in government business and restrict his meetings and communications with government officials. Despite the prohibition,

EXPULSION AND EXILE

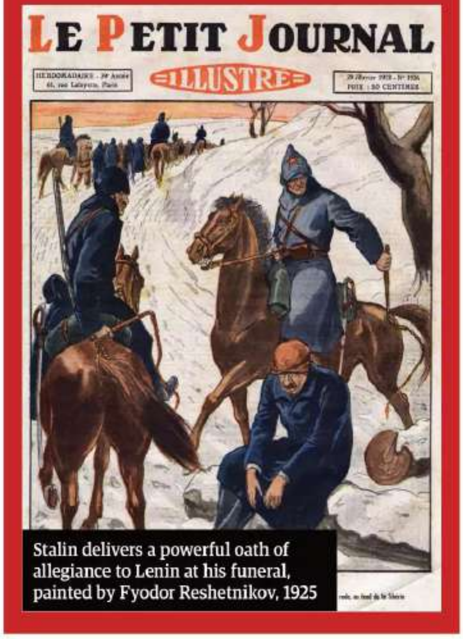
Unwilling to admit defeat, Trotsky was finally booted out of the USSR in 1929

By 1927 Trotsky may have had little power - he was no longer even a party member - but he had plenty of influence. He was second in the Bolshevik pantheon only to Lenin.

Keen to get him out of the way, the Politburo offered him an 'economic planning' role in Astrakhan, on the Caspian Sea. Trotsky refused, saying he would rather be formally exiled than agree to this hypocrisy, and besides, the climate wasn't ideal for his health and he'd much rather go somewhere warmer.

That was the final straw. Against his will he was dispatched to the remote village of Alma-Ata (now Almaty) in Kazakhstan, a gruelling nine-day journey with his family by train, teams of horse-drawn carts, and finally by car. Despite being out of the Kremlin's eyeline, Trotsky continued to organise the United Opposition, until finally the OGPU came to warn him off in person.

True to form, Trotsky refused to stand down and Stalin expelled him from the Soviet Union in February 1929. He spent 12 years wandering; five years in Turkey, two in France, one in Norway, and then the final four years of his life in Mexico, where at least the climate suited him.



Stalin delivers a powerful oath of allegiance to Lenin at his funeral, painted by Fyodor Reshetnikov, 1925

"STALIN HAS UNLIMITED AUTHORITY CONCENTRATED IN HIS HANDS, AND I AM NOT SURE WHETHER HE WILL ALWAYS BE CAPABLE OF USING THAT AUTHORITY WITH SUFFICIENT CAUTION"

Lenin's personal secretariat continued to request and receive government reports.

On 30 December 1922 the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics was conjured into being, with the Transcaucasian Soviet Federated Socialist Republic as a member. The existence of the USSR was Lenin's great victory from September, but the survival of the TSFSR was a strong reminder of Stalin's influence.

In January 1923 Lenin added to his Testament, his tone more aggressive than the school report of December: "Stalin is too rude and this defect, although quite tolerable in our midst and in dealing among us Communists, becomes intolerable in a Secretary General. That is why I suggest that the comrades think about a way of removing Stalin from that post."

Lenin suffered a stroke in March 1923 that left him paralysed down one side and unable to speak. "He kept trying to say something, but only quiet, disjointed sounds emerged," noted the physicians. Her reasons as inscrutable as the letter's authenticity, Lenin's wife Nadezhda Krupskaya held onto the document until May, when she passed it onto Zinoviev.

Krupskaya had opened Pandora's Box. Though all of the prominent Bolsheviks were criticised, Trotsky came off most favourably, while Stalin had been subject to the only concrete recommendation - that he be removed. "He shit on himself," exclaimed Stalin, "and he shit on us!"

Pamphlets and counter-pamphlets emerged to capitalise on the discord. Those published by the Trotskyites demanded the removal of the Troika, citing Lenin's lack of confidence, while those around Stalin published potted biographies of Trotsky, reminding everyone of his late conversion to Bolshevism, his Menshevik origins and his past public criticisms of Lenin.

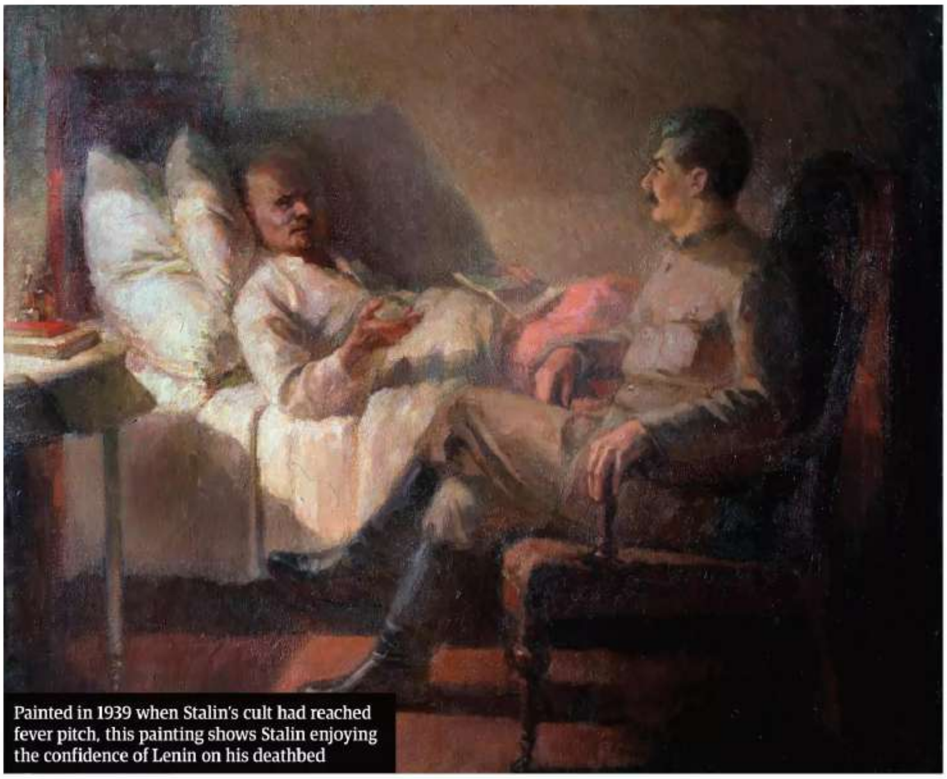
With Lenin out of the picture, Stalin's fight for survival became a feeding frenzy in which old alliances were torn up. In July, Zinoviev wrote to Kamenev to complain bitterly that "in reality there is no Troika, there is only Stalin's dictatorship. Either a serious way out has to be found or a long stretch of struggle is inevitable."

Zinoviev canvassed the Politburo for support, proposing that he and Trotsky be installed on the Central Committee Secretariat. Zinoviev had not only turned on his old friend, but was even prepared to work with his enemy to undermine Stalin's fiefdom.

Foreign policy would give the furious Stalin an opportunity to see off the coup and tear a chunk off his rivals.

Weimar Germany seemed on the verge of collapse, with hyperinflation leading to widespread strike action. This surfaced some of the most profound ideological splits within the Bolshevik

Zinoviev was once one third of Stalin's triumvirate


Painted in 1939 when Stalin's cult had reached fever pitch, this painting shows Stalin enjoying the confidence of Lenin on his deathbed

A shocking final photograph of Lenin alive, showing him after his third and final stroke which left him paralysed and struggling to communicate. He is watched by a nurse and a physician

leadership, with, on the one extreme, Trotsky's belief in constant rolling world revolution as the only safeguard for the new Soviet state, and on the other, Stalin's more pragmatic conviction that the USSR needed to get its own house in order before it started antagonising an already frostily disposed international community.

In this, Trotsky had key Politburo allies in Zinoviev and, from the intellectual wing of the party, Nikolai Bukharin.

Realising that he risked being outmanoeuvred on such a sensitive topic, Stalin called an emergency Politburo session for 21 August to discuss the Soviet reaction to Germany's descent into social chaos. This threw whatever plans his rivals were cooking up into disarray.

"We have to prepare for war seriously and thoroughly," he told them, raising the stakes considerably, "since in the end it will be a matter of the existence of the Soviet Federation and of the fate of the world revolution."

This was a canny move. Without opposing calls for intervention, he had painted his enemies as naive, prepared to gamble not just the new Soviet Union but the whole future of Bolshevism, while Stalin alone understood the consequences.

He resisted Trotsky and Zinoviev's push for a specific date for the German Revolution, instead arguing that they needed to observe the situation and wait for precisely the right moment. Bukharin agreed, and the more conservative faction on the Politburo under Alexei Rykov saw an opportunity to halt the madness, throwing their votes behind the General Secretary.

As it happened, the 'German Revolution' was a washout; the German communists had overestimated their numbers and support, and turned out to be more interested in taking down the mainstream left Social Democrats than presenting a united left-wing front.

In light of events, the Central Committee agreed to place Stalin and some of his loyalists on the military's governing body, the Revolutionary Military Council, causing Trotsky to storm out in a rage. "I request that you delete me from the list of actors of this humiliating comedy," he snapped, before trying and failing to slam a heavy iron door.

After months of shifting loyalties and glances over the shoulder, firm battle lines were being drawn – as much by fear of the other than support for 'their guy.' Many of those who flocked to Stalin and the Troika feared Trotsky's extremism, while those who gathered around Trotsky and his Left Opposition faction did so in resistance to Stalin's dictatorial impulses and the opaque web of functionaries and bureaucracy that he had spun around himself. Lenin finally died in January 1924, but by this point it felt like old news. The fight for succession was in full swing.

Stalin had always been Lenin's man. He cultivated the image of moderate heir, determined to hold the centre ground and continue Lenin's great mission. He was popular with the party rank and file because of his humble origins, long service to the cause, and careful manipulation of the patronage system.

"He is needed by all of them," Trotsky raged, "by the tired radicals, by the bureaucrats, by the NEPmen [those who benefited from the New Economic Policy], the kulaks, the upstarts, the sneaks, by all the worms that are crawling out of the upturned soil of the manured revolution."

Without Lenin's patient support, Trotsky was isolated, and in one session of the Politburo Zinoviev sneered at him: "Your tricks no longer work, you're in a minority, you're in the singular."

Stalin, pictured with some of his loyalists in 1927. Bukharin sits to his left and on his right is Kliment Voroshilov, the first Red Army commander appointed to the Politburo by Stalin

THE IGNORANT PEASANT?

Stalin's rivals underestimated his intelligence at their cost

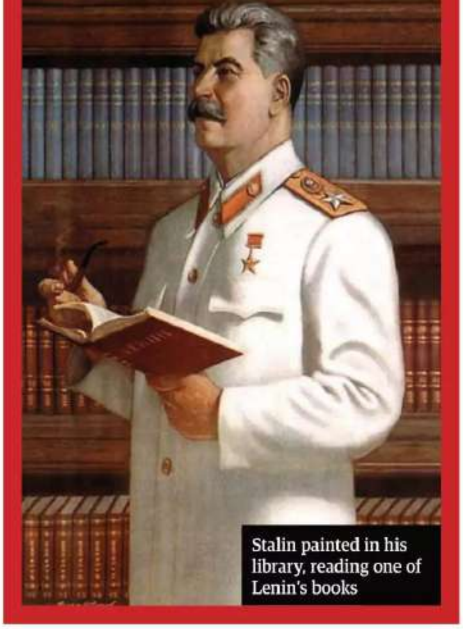
Stalin was easily caricatured as ignorant. His often boorish manner, his thick Georgian accent, his dark hair and Caucasian features, and his 'Asian' (to quote Lenin) habit of sucking on a pipe all marked him out as an uncouth provincial in contrast to suave university-educated revolutionaries like Lenin, Trotsky, Kamenev or Bukharin.

This was incredibly misleading. Despite the seminary being Stalin's only formal education, he was a prolific autodidact from an early age, who read copiously and learned fast. When in Siberian exile under the Tsar he frequently wrote to his friends "send me some books!"

Ample evidence of his attention to detail and ability to grasp complex situations quickly can be found in Stalin's running of the vast Central Committee Secretariat, which he obsessively micromanaged and engineered to malignant perfection.

In the wake of Lenin's death, these skills came into their own, as one prominent Soviet literary critic observed: "Kamenev, Zinoviev, Bukharin, even Trotsky were much less familiar with the texts of Lenin's writings than Stalin." Able to quote, interpret and argue his canon at length, Stalin was able to position himself as the most convincing custodian of Lenin's legacy.

By the end of his life Stalin had accumulated 25,000 books and journals in his library, and they weren't just for show – he covered them in annotations.



Stalin painted in his library, reading one of Lenin's books

"HE HAD PAINTED HIS ENEMIES AS NAIVE, PREPARED TO GAMBLE NOT JUST THE NEW SOVIET UNION BUT THE WHOLE FUTURE OF BOLSHEVISM, WHILE HE ALONE UNDERSTOOD THE CONSEQUENCES"

Kamenev was frequently taunted with the reminder that he refused to support the October Revolution, believing it unlikely to succeed

Lenin and Stalin pictured at Gorki, during one of Lenin's periods of convalescence. The photograph was released in *Pravda* to show both the fine state of Lenin's health and Stalin's closeness to him

Despite his newly accumulated power, Stalin felt vulnerable - the Testament hung over him like a stormcloud and Zinoviev's manoeuvering against him - like Lenin's two years earlier - was a reminder that no loyalties could ever be truly guaranteed. He decided to pull the rug out from the whole enterprise, gambling on the anti-Trotsky centrists needing him more than he needed them.

Speaking to the Central Committee, he alleged that following Lenin's death, Zinoviev and Kamenev had demonstrated the "impossibility of an honest and sincere political collaboration." Stalin then resigned and asked for a minor post in Siberia or further afield.

The resignation was rejected. Behind the scenes the anti-Trotsky faction rallied to form a Semerka to replace the now-sundered Troika, a group of seven that included the entire Politburo sans Trotsky, plus the Chairman of the Central Control Commission. Essentially this was a 'shadow Politburo' with the sole aim of keeping Stalin, Zinoviev and Kamenev on the same side so that Trotsky's Left Opposition movement could be kept out of government.

For the first time since Lenin seized power in 1917 and for the last time until Stalin's death in 1953, the Bolshevik state was not under the overriding influence of a single leader. In fact, the era of collective leadership among a smaller coterie of powerbrokers proved surprisingly efficient and dynamic, but it wouldn't last. With the Semerka now running the show, Trotsky was removed from the Commissariat of Military and Naval Affairs in January 1925 and Zinoviev went even further, trying to eject him from the Politburo. It was too much too soon and Stalin, ever the opportunist, opposed the defenestration and claimed the moral high ground by calling for unity. Trotsky wasn't his most dangerous enemy anymore, and Stalin concentrated his efforts on getting rid of the remnant of the Troika, allying himself with Bukharin and Rykov.

The future of the New Economic Policy would be the beginning of the end, and Zinoviev and Kamenev tried to harness grassroots populism to strike a blow against Stalin. Many Bolsheviks whinged that that the NEP had created a capitalist fifth column of NEPmen in the heart of the worker's paradise and the kulaks, the hated landowning peasants who were blamed for all rural ills, had been emboldened.

But it had done the Soviet economy some good, plus it was a legacy of Lenin, and opposition to it was seen as one of the hallmarks of the Trotskyites, so for the centrists Zinoviev and Kamenev to clamour for its abolition was a particularly high-stakes gamble.

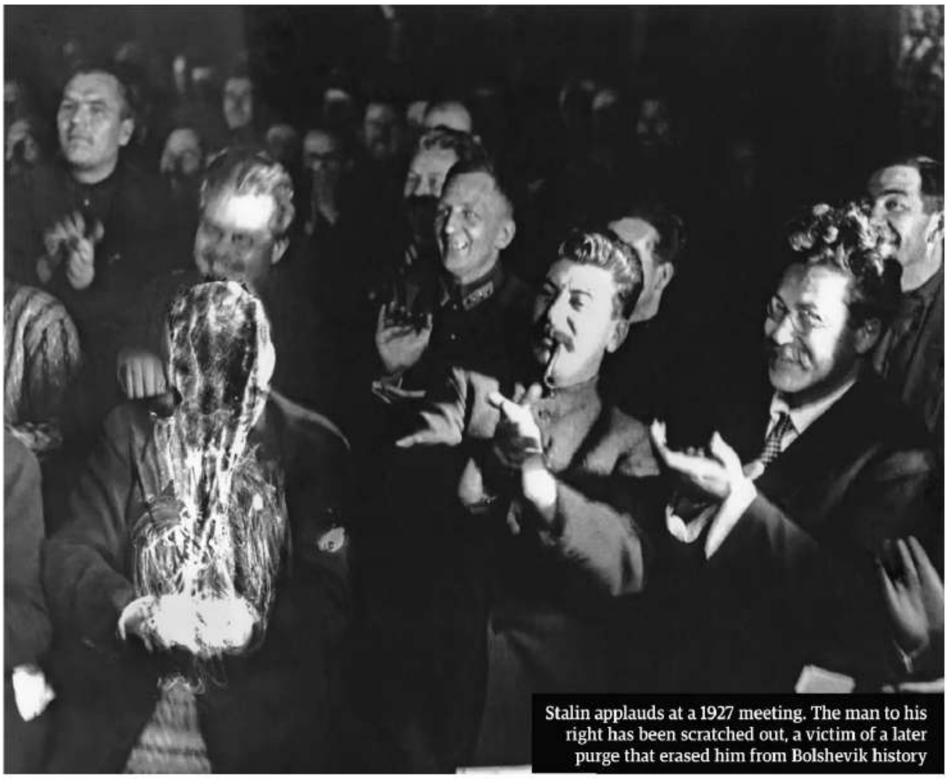
They had grossly miscalculated. The Party Congress took its lead from consensus at the top, not their personal feelings. Only the Leningrad delegation backed the motion, and they had been stuffed with patsies by its branch chief Zinoviev. Stalin took his opportunity to get rid of them.

Immediately the Central Committee voted to replace the leadership in Leningrad with the Stalin acolyte Sergei Kirov. There were mass transfers to remote postings, sackings and recriminations, and Kirov wrote that "at times it even came to fist fights in some corners of the meeting."

While the regime change in Leningrad deprived Zinoviev of a constituency from which to agitate, it gave Stalin's opponents ample evidence of his strongarm tactics. It must have given them grim satisfaction then to find the agencies of state oppression increasingly leveled against them as Stalin's grip on the Politburo tightened.

One Zinoviev supporter, Mikhail Lashevich, was reported organising a banned meeting of Zinoviev and Kamenev's New Opposition faction by an undercover OGPU agent. Although no evidence

Stalin pictured early on in Lenin's illness, when his dictatorship began to form



Stalin applauds at a 1927 meeting. The man to his right has been scratched out, a victim of a later purge that erased him from Bolshevik history

The ambitious Grigory Zinoviev, pictured in the 1920s

could be found that Zinoviev actually had any hand in orchestrating the gathering, it was used as a convenient pretext to remove him from the Politburo completely.

Singling out Zinoviev and ignoring Kamenev kept up the illusion of impartiality, but Stalin found the more he flexed those autocratic muscles, the easier it became to get what he wanted.

At the 15th Party Congress on 26 October, Stalin and Trotsky traded verbal blows, with Stalin mocking his rival's pretentious writing style. Seething, Trotsky sprung to his feet and levelled his most memorable accusation: "The first secretary poses his candidacy to the post of grave digger of the revolution!"

Trotsky and Kamenev were expelled from the Politburo. This didn't silence the opposition, of course, but it made them more easily criminalised. Foreshadowing the later terror wrought by the Stalinist security apparatus, Stalin directed a police sting against an illegal opposition printing press, planting forged evidence that they were planning a military coup against the government.

In October 1927, Zinoviev and Trotsky were removed from the Central Committee. When Trotsky tried to speak, a glass and book were thrown at him, and someone tried to drag him from the podium while the delegates shouted and jeered at Trotsky. He used his nuclear option, and read from Lenin's Testament - but it was three years too late.

"Yes, I'm rude, comrades," replied Stalin, a response to Lenin's previous criticism of him. He continued - "in connection with those who rudely and treacherously destroy and split the party!"

That month was the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution. In a publicity stunt, an alternative commemoration to the official Party proceedings were organised by the United Opposition, created by a merger of the New Opposition with Trotsky's Left Opposition. It was dispersed by the police and used as a catalyst for a fresh wave of expulsions.

At the 15th Party Congress in December, the United Opposition was officially sanctioned and Trotsky, who refused to show any contrition, was exiled to Kazakhstan. Defiant to the last, on the morning of his departure the OGPU had to break down the door and physically carry him off.

Not naturally one given to compromise, Trotsky had always come off worse in Central Committee deal breaking, but his real mistake was in not making use of Lenin's damning Testament against Stalin early enough, nor capitalising on his own immense popularity with the Red Army. Instead, Trotsky stuck to lofty economic theory and ideological purity, and even then he was unable to make meaningful gains on those fronts. The ever-pragmatic Stalin, meanwhile, held the political process in a chokehold.

Why Stalin emerged as Lenin's successor has just as much to do with Trotsky's well-known stubbornness and arrogance as it does Stalin's utter ruthlessness and political cynicism. In short, Trotsky was the better leader, but Stalin was the better politician.

On 1 January 1928 an old veteran of the revolution, Valerian Osinsky, wrote to Stalin to urge moderation against their misguided comrades: "These sorts of banishments only create unnecessary bitterness... They intensify whisperings about similarities between our current regime and the old [Tsarist] police state."

Stalin returned his letter to him, grimly promising "that the party is doing everything possible and necessary." Perhaps Osinsky thought back to those words in 1938 when he was executed. The age of collective leadership was over, and the age of Stalin was just beginning.

"STALIN FOUND THE MORE HE FLEXED THOSE AUTOCRATIC MUSCLES, THE EASIER IT BECAME TO GET WHAT HE WANTED"

Lenin lying in state, 1924

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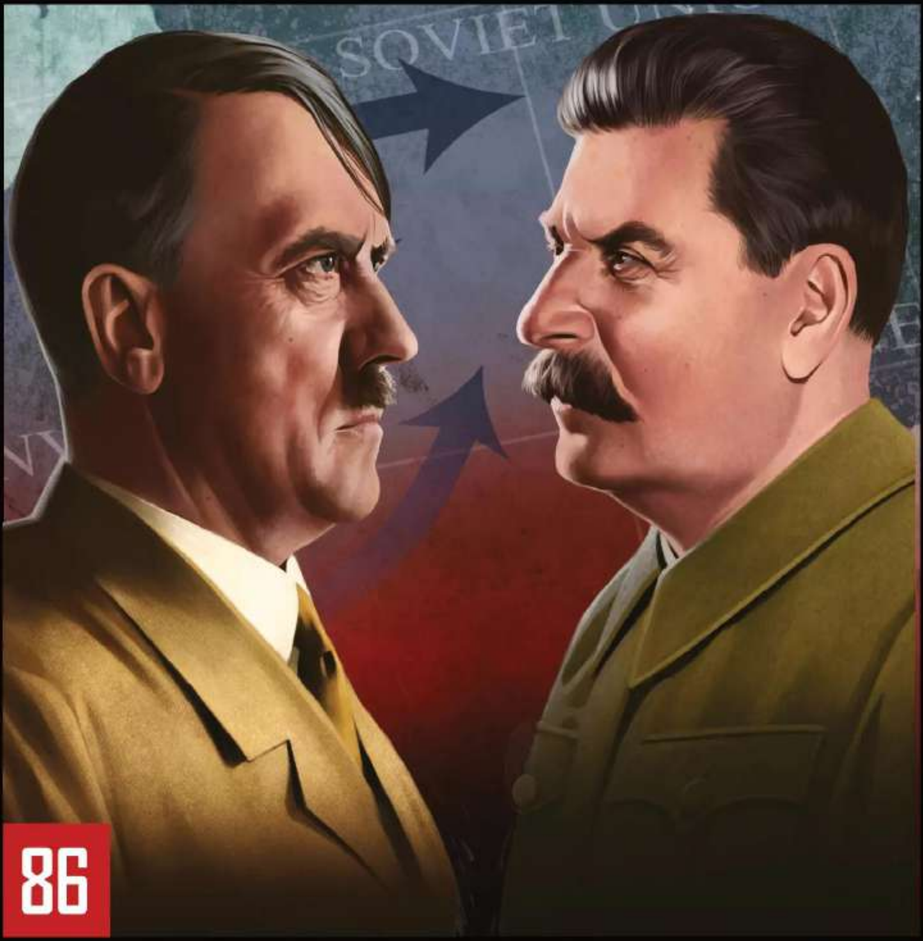

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THE HOLODOMOR

Beginning in 1932, a vast famine swept Ukraine. Millions died in the tragedy known as Holodomor, but the causes and Stalin's role in exacerbating the crisis remain controversial

WORDS: GREG KING

Between 1932-1933, millions of people died from a brutal famine in Ukraine. The roots of the crisis lay in diminished harvests, but the catastrophe was exacerbated by an unforgiving Soviet policy of collectivisation and deliberate efforts by Stalin to crack down on Ukrainian separatism. For decades the Soviet Union denied the tragedy; even today the causes and the death toll remain subjects of international controversy.

The tragedy is known as the Holodomor, derived from the Ukrainian words *holod*, meaning 'hunger', and *mor*, indicating 'plague' or 'death'. The term 'Holodomor' roughly translates as 'to kill by starvation'. This reflects the widespread view that much of the famine was man-made, a deliberate creation of the Stalinist regime to weaken the resolve of the Ukrainian population.

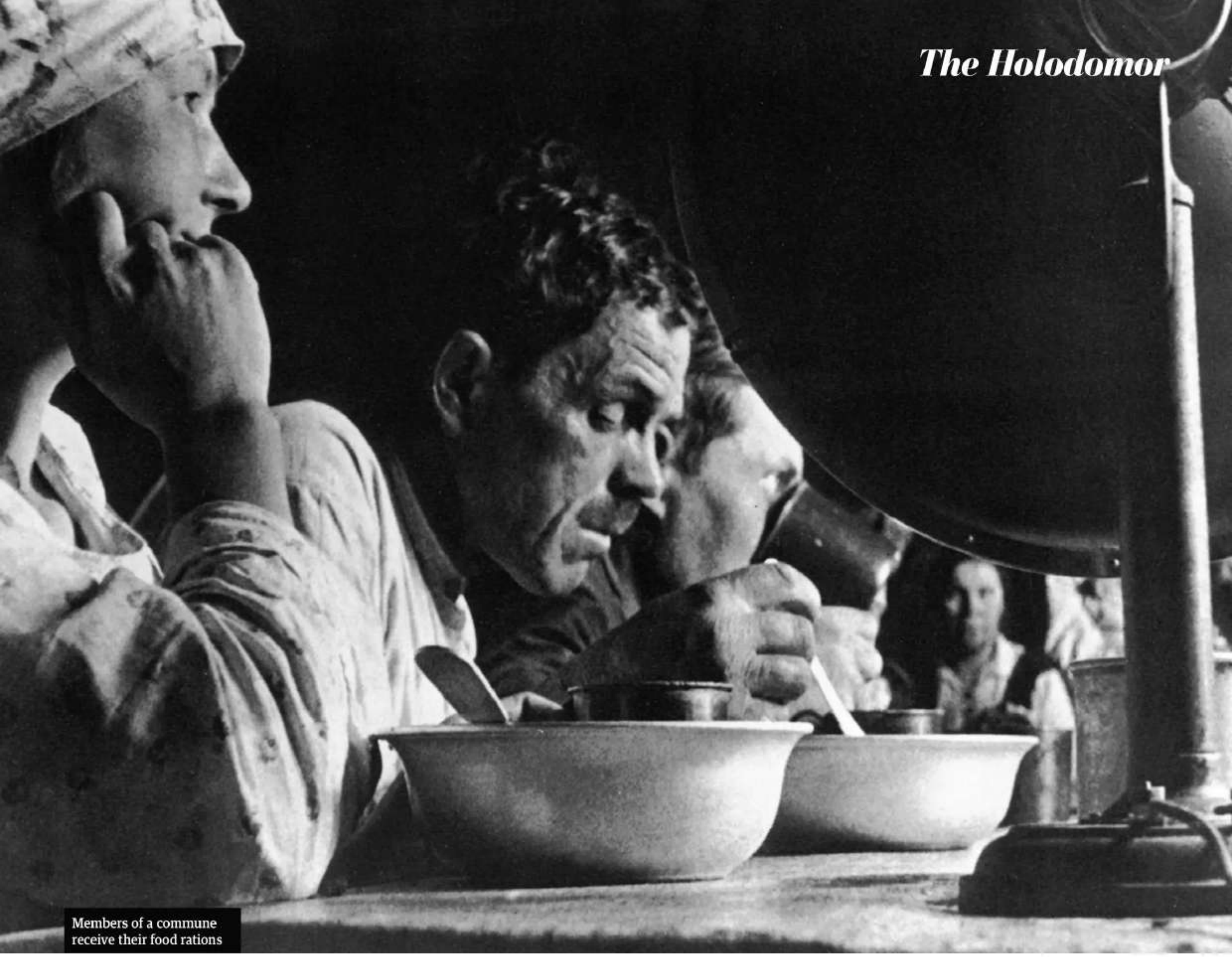
In 1929 Stalin introduced agricultural collectivization as part of his first Five Year Plan, forcing families to hand over their private farms, livestock and equipment to authorities and to work for the government. This policy proved difficult in the Ukraine, which had long provided Russia with the majority of its agriculture. The wealthier peasants had the most to lose: the state branded them 'Kulaks' ('tight-fisted') and denounced them as enemies of the USSR; in truth, many of the condemned were poor, but their resistance to collectivisation marked them out for retribution.

Starting in 1930, the state began to liquidate them. Some were evicted from their farms and sent to labour camps; some were arrested and exiled; some were executed. By 1932, nearly 2 million Ukrainian resisters had been sent to Siberia, where, lacking food or housing, they often perished.

Collectivisation hampered productivity. Left without incentive, the yield of some farmers decreased; the arrest and exile of others also left a significant gap in the available manpower. Ukraine had largely harvested wheat; the Five Year Plan disrupted the established order by insisting that collective farms add cotton or sugar beets to their crops. The success rate for these new introductions was dismal. Droughts played into the growing crisis, as did government confiscation of all crops and Stalin's decision to continue grain exports even as his famine threatened his people.

Moscow expected Ukraine to provide one-third of the country's grain harvest. When the numbers for 1931 came in they exceeded expectations; over-zealous local officials had collected more tons than called for in their quotas, resulting in a surprise surplus. Any good bureaucrat in Moscow

The corpse of a Holodomor victim lies in the street



Members of a commune receive their food rations

could have spotted the disparity, but rather than view 1931 as an anomaly, they expected the same quotas to be met in 1932. Stalin would later blame the famine on officials who had over-estimated the harvest, but his own actions deliberately exacerbated the problem.

By July 1932, Ukrainian crops had yielded just a sixth of the previous year's harvest; by the end of the year only 4.3 tons of grain had been harvested, as opposed to 7.2 million the previous year. Unable to understand the devastating effect of the droughts, the loss of agricultural manpower and the change in crops as factors contributing to the looming crisis, Moscow insisted that the poor harvest was the work of Kulaks, Ukrainian nationalists, or foreign agents and began fomenting public opinion against Ukrainian farmers.

There is no doubt that Stalin's brutal Ukrainian policies were driven by his suspicion that the federation teemed with nationalists and anti-Soviet elements. In his increasing paranoia he saw enemies everywhere, and the famine became a convenient excuse he could use to root out those he viewed as enemies of the state.

In late 1932 the crisis passed from natural disaster to man-made tragedy. Stalin used the ongoing catastrophe to launch a programme of Ukrainian repression. Kulaks were not the only victims: Moscow's policies became, in effect, an organised effort to root out Ukrainian nationalism, and there was no measure too barbaric.

Stalin held Ukrainian intellectuals in particular contempt, believing that they worked to undermine the state in an attempt to achieve independence. In addition to the farmers, writers, professors, artists, poets and philosophers were also arrested, exiled or shot. Within a few short years the federation's culture had all but been erased. Thus Stalin's policies became a deliberate, orchestrated effort to starve Ukraine into submission.

Officials in Moscow introduced a food rationing system that focused largely on industrial workers and urban residents; those involved in agriculture had reduced rations, and these were allotted based on the type and duration of labour, meaning the most vulnerable – the elderly, women and children – were often denied rations or received them only sporadically. Starvation soon became a problem.

"THE ELDERLY, WOMEN AND CHILDREN WERE OFTEN DENIED RATIONS OR RECEIVED THEM ONLY SPORADICALLY"

On 7 August 1932, the Soviet Government introduced a new law, "On the Safekeeping of Socialist Property," that imposed draconian penalties on theft of anything deemed to belong to the state, including food or any unharvested grain. This law was largely directed only at Ukraine. It singled out "Kulaks, former traders, and other socially-alien persons" for harsh prison sentences of up to ten years or the death penalty. Three months later, Stalin issued an even more brutal order: "Starting today, there will be immediate cessation of delivery of goods, complete suspension of cooperative and state trade in the villages, and removal of all available goods from cooperative and state stores." Farmers deemed enemies of the state were no longer allowed to purchase goods or provisions necessary to sustain life. This order was to remain in place "until all collectives and individual peasants begin to honestly and conscientiously fulfil their duty to the working class and to the Red Army by supplying grain."

To enforce these new laws the state organised brutal quasi-military brigades of armed factory workers and soldiers, who raided villages and seized all grain and goods from those suspected of being enemies; those who resisted were shot. "The authorities confiscated all the bread," recalled one survivor, "removed it from the villages, loaded grain into the railway coaches and took it away

someplace. They searched the houses, taking away everything to the smallest thing. All the vegetable gardens, all the cellars were raked out and everything was taken away."

Another law allowed these military brigades to confiscate all livestock from those farms that had failed to meet their quotas. Within six months nearly 55,000 people had been imprisoned and over 2,000 executed under these laws, numbers that continued to swell in 1933. To prevent the starving people from fleeing, the NKVD sealed the Ukrainian borders in January 1933 and imposed new internal passport restrictions, denying travel papers to the starving farmers and peasants. Military blockades went up and agents prowled the highways and railway stations. Under these measures, more than 200,000 people were arrested in early 1933, either imprisoned or sent back to their barren farms to die from hunger.

Moscow first had reports of epidemic starvation in Ukraine by early 1933; some relief in the form of food was sent south to the affected areas, but the distribution was disorganised and subject to Stalin's dictates, so those deemed enemies would receive no aid. Even at the height of the crisis, the government exported nearly 2 million tons of grain, which would have fed millions of Soviet citizens.

The famine decimated entire villages: by the summer of 1933, an estimated 24,000 people were dying of starvation every single day. The future Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev remembered that in his small Ukrainian village, "Nearly half of the population starved to death, including my father's brother and two sisters." Survival was now a daily struggle. Livestock was the first edible item to disappear: those animals who survived being eaten themselves starved to death, as their owners could not feed them. Some farmers tossed the carcasses into pits for burial but were inevitably interrupted by neighbours. "I still remember people screaming by one burial pit," recalled an eyewitness. "Driven to madness by hunger, they were ripping the meat of the dead animals. The stronger ones were getting bigger pieces."

When the livestock disappeared people ate their pets. The desperate chased dogs and cats, killing and cooking them. Some starving farmers, worn out and unable to continue the chase, simply collapsed from exhaustion and died in the streets and fields. "People were lying everywhere as dead flies," said one villager. "The stench was awful." The horrific sight became commonplace. "The dogs ate the ones that were not buried," said one villager. But soon all of the dogs had vanished. "Finally, we couldn't hear them barking anymore," recalled a resident of Uspenska, "as they had been eaten up."

Next the fish and frogs in the rivers disappeared, then swallows, pigeons and other birds. People ate leather shoes, worms, flowers and the bark and blossoms off trees. "We tried to survive the best we could," said one Ukrainian. "We collected grass, goose-foot, and rotten potatoes and made pancakes or soups from putrid beans or nettles."

Carts filled with bread leaving Ukraine

GENOCIDE OR NOT?

Although the Holodomor began as a natural disaster, many scholars believe that Stalin's anti-Ukrainian policies pushed the tragedy into the realm of deliberate genocide

Few dispute that the onset of the famine owed its existence to natural phenomenon and bureaucratic ineptitude, but it is difficult to reconcile Stalin's anti-Ukrainian policies with any assertion that his intent was not the decimation of the Republic's ethnic majority. In 1953, Dr. Raphael Lemkin, who wrote the United Nations' Genocide Convention, deemed the Holodomor as "a classic example of genocide" meant to cause "the destruction of the Ukrainian nation."

In 2003, 25 countries signed a joint UN statement: "In the former Soviet Union millions of men, women and children fell victims to the cruel actions and policies of the totalitarian regime. The Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine (Holodomor), took from 7 million to 10 million innocent lives and became a national tragedy for the Ukrainian people." The word "genocide" never appeared.

In October 2008 the European Parliament officially recognized the Holodomor as a crime against humanity, though it did not label it as genocide. Stung by these diplomatic decisions, the Ukrainian Parliament formally declared that the Holodomor had indeed been a deliberate act of genocide in November 2008. Fifteen other countries, including Australia, Canada, Poland and Portugal, have also declared the Holodomor an act of genocide. Most European countries, Great Britain, and the United States, have condemned it as a crime against humanity but refuse to label it as genocide.

Children sit beside the corpse of a Holodomor victim

The Holodomor completely wiped out entire communities

Hungry families secretly bartered furniture, clothing and gold teeth for handfuls of grain, risking arrest in an effort to stave off death. But the deaths continued. The brigades swept through villages, loading carts with the corpses of those who had perished in the streets. They were also known to grab the emaciated, throwing them in with the bodies and tossing them, still alive, into common graves.

People drank water to fill their empty stomachs: they shambled along in near skeletal form, bellies bloated in agony, until they fell. Death was everywhere. Galina Gubenko, a young village girl from the Poltava region, remembered. "People died at work; it was of no concern whether your body was swollen, whether you could work, whether you have eaten, whether you could - you had to go and work. Otherwise you were the enemy of the people." She recalled country roads strewn with the bodies of the dead who had scoured the fields in search of the smallest morsel of grain. Some had died of hunger in their quest; others had fallen victim to the military patrols, who "hunted them down, collected everything, trampled down the gathered grain, and beat the people".

When the animals disappeared, people began to eat their dead friends and relatives. Hollow-eyed groups of peasants tore away at the pitiful mass graves, ripping arms and legs from the gaunt corpses and retching as they consumed the rotting flesh. Many others turned to cannibalism. Families with several children would select the youngest and weakest to devour. "One of our neighbours," recalled Olexandra Rafalska, "came home to find that her husband, suffering from severe starvation, had eaten their own baby, a daughter. The woman went crazy." Sergei Lozovi remembered that his neighbours "cut off their children's heads and salted them away for meat". People "smelled meat frying in the smoke coming from the chimney and, noticing the absence of the children, entered the house. When they asked about the children,

"EVEN WORSE, THE PARENTS EXPLAINED THAT THEY PLANNED TO HAVE MORE CHILDREN SO THAT THEY COULD EAT THEM"

the parents began to weep and told the whole story." Even worse, the parents explained that they planned to quickly have more children so that they could eat them, or else "they would die in great pain and it would be the end of the family".

The practice of parents killing and consuming their sons and daughters became so prevalent that the Soviet Government actually distributed posters proclaiming, "It is a barbaric act to eat your own children." At least 2,500 people were convicted of cannibalism between 1933-1934, though the actual numbers were undoubtedly higher.

The harvest slowly began returning to normal by 1935, but recovery would not be complete until after the end of World War II. When reports of the tragedy first reached Europe and America, Soviet officials derided them as capitalist propaganda and even refused aid that was offered. Some enterprising journalists and officials did their best to spread word of what was happening, but few took notice. Others, like reporter Walter Duranty of *The New York Times*, assured readers that stories of widespread famine were fabrications: Stalin's Soviet Union, Duranty insisted, was a workers' paradise.

The denials continue to this day. The Holodomor remains a thorn in the side of modern Russia. Until the advent of glasnost (a policy of openness and transparency), the subject, like so much in Soviet history, was forbidden. In the revisionist swing that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russian studies of the famine began revealing the full horror of what had happened and squarely placed the blame on Stalin and his totalitarian state. But the pendulum has once again swung back. In recognising the undeniable tragedy, Vladimir Putin's Russia has consistently pushed back against the idea that it was in any way genocidal.

In 2008, the Russian State Duma denounced Stalin's general famine policies of 1932-1933 as "disregarding the lives of people in the pursuit of economic and political goals," yet insisted "there exists no historical evidence that the famine was organised against any ethnic group." This has become the modern Russian line: the Holodomor was a common tragedy shared by all Soviet people; exacerbated by Stalin's policies, but not the result of a concerted effort against the Ukrainian people.

The famine, coupled with Stalin's policies against Ukraine, decimated a generation. The death toll was staggering, but it will never be known precisely how many fell victim to starvation. The Soviet Government kept diligent records but these were selective and often failed to include those who died by being sent into exile to starve and those who succumbed to the typhoid and typhus epidemics that ravaged the stricken countryside. Some estimates of the death toll reach 20 million, though this number lacks statistical support.

More commonly accepted figures rendered the collective death toll at between 7 to 10 million people. In 2010, the Ukrainian Court of Appeals declared that approximately 10 million people had perished in these years of immense suffering. It also stated that 3.9 million had starved to death; of this number, a staggering 2 million starved to death in just three months from May to July 1933. The other deaths occurred from widespread illness exacerbated by the famine, by executions and by enforced exile. The effects of malnutrition and rampant disease lingered, further decimating Ukraine. Some measure of these terrible statistics comes from the life expectancy figures: on average, girls born in 1933 lived to just ten years, while life expectancy for boys was a mere seven years.

The famine had begun as a natural disaster: Stalin's policies carried it into the realm of man-made catastrophe. Historians might continue to argue about the causes and the responsibility, but there can be little doubt that Stalin's anti-Ukrainian dictates not only accelerated the tragedy but also dramatically increased the final death toll. The famine gave him an excuse to make war on the Ukrainians under the guise of protecting the Soviet state and advancing the proletariat cause.

The raw statistics are telling: of those who perished in the famine, fully 81 per cent were ethnic Ukrainians, while just over four per cent were Russians.

Any form of nationalism was brutally stamped out, as it threatened the USSR's dominance. The Ukrainian cultural elite was virtually erased; villages were destroyed and the Ukrainian language was suppressed - and all to appease Stalin's paranoia and quest for complete control.

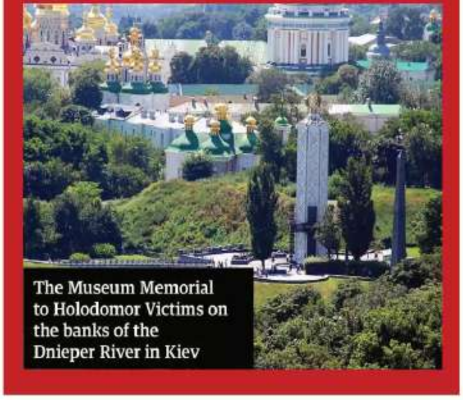
REMEMBERING THE HOLODOMOR

As debate over the causes of the Holodomor continues, the victims of the tragedy have not been forgotten

The first public memorial to the victims of the Holodomor was erected in Edmonton in Alberta, Canada, in 1983; since then a number of other countries have established monuments marking the tragedy, which is officially commemorated on the fourth Saturday of each November. The largest of these monuments can be found in Kiev, where the Museum Memorial to Holodomor Victims opened on the banks of the Dnieper River in 2008.

In addition to exhibits and artifacts telling the story of the famine, the complex includes a subterranean Hall of Memory, approached along a walk flanked by two statues of weeping angels. Twenty-four Stones of Destiny form a circle of remembrance, representing life and the fact that, during the worst of the crisis, up to 24,000 Ukrainians perished every 24 hours.

Perhaps the most poignant of the memorials is a statue, Bitter Memory of Childhood: her hands clutch sheaves of wheat, face gaunt, as her hollow eyes gaze out in perpetual mourning for the millions of children who perished in the famine.



The Museum Memorial to Holodomor Victims on the banks of the Dnieper River in Kiev

The Holodomor monument Bitter Memory of Childhood in Kiev

Propaganda poster: "Grain to the State!"

STALIN'S LETHAL SECRET POLICE AGENCY

Like other brutal and repressive dictators, Stalin relied on a merciless police force to ensure nobody threatened his rule

WORDS: JOANNA ELPHICK

Russia's historical landscape has been forever stained with blood, shed through centuries of political violence and the inhumane treatment of its people. Opponents to the ruler of the day, be it Peter the Great, Ivan the Terrible or Vladimir Lenin were identified and systematically removed in order to ensure total and unequivocal control through the use of secret police. Each leader learnt from his predecessors, choosing the most effective techniques to quell his rivals until, during the brutal rule of Joseph Stalin, a series of deadly state security agencies were developed and unleashed upon an already whipped country.

Stalin perfected the fine art of terror using a series of brutal organisations, initially adopting Lenin's infamous Cheka but gradually creating his own unique instruments of terror and repression.

The Vecheka (Cheka for short), the 'All-Russian Extraordinary Committee to Combat Counter-Revolution and Sabotage', under the cruel gaze of Felix Dzerzhinsky, set the wheels in motion for a horrific police force, acting as investigator, judge, jury and, ultimately, executioner. Affectionately known by Lenin as his 'special apparatus', it was designed to eliminate all 'class enemies'.

On 6 February 1922 Cheka morphed into the GPU but quickly changed once again into the OGPU, the 'Joint State Political Directorate', in 1923. Stalin used them to round up and deport the Kulaks, or 'tight-fisted', who remained a major thorn in his side, and to oversee the infamous Gulags. A number of key players were placed in charge of the Corrective Labour Camps, but one, Genrikh Yagoda, would outlive the OGPU and rise further up the blood-soaked pole to power.

The OGPU had been a highly effective tool in the clearing away of Kulaks and the implementation of the Gulags but Stalin was still not satisfied. While the problems further afield were being controlled, serious issues closer to home were being overlooked. Someone was needed to quash any potential uprisings occurring under their noses that had, up until then, been ignored. It was at this point Stalin decided to create his greatest and most terrifying state security agency, the lethal NKVD, or 'People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs'. If life for the Russian people had been difficult under the OGPU, it was to get infinitely worse under this new regime of horror.

The NKVD unified all forms of militia and the general police force into one all-powerful unit. This included the Special Sessions, an agency with

vast judicial functions that dealt with suspected terrorists and revolutionaries without the need for witnesses. Literally a law unto itself, the Special Sessions were feared by anyone unlucky enough to fall foul of Stalin. The NKVD combined all the vicious tactics of previous secret organisations with a wide array of new powers that crushed any opposition brave - or stupid - enough to raise its head in protest.

One such protester was Sergei Kostrikov, or Kirov, a once adored protégé of Stalin who simply disagreed with his leader and refused to back down. The younger, charismatic Kirov impressed the people and quickly became a rival to the leadership. Such impudence needed eradicating, and the NKVD was the perfect instrument for the job. Stalin had been deeply impressed by Genrikh Yagoda's work during his time overseeing the Corrective Labour Camps and was quick to appoint his brutal acolyte as head of the NKVD. Here was a man who fully embraced his leader's violent methods, claiming that 'the only way of dealing with Kulaks was with bullets'.

Born on 7 November, 1891 into a good Jewish family, Yagoda was an exceptional social climber, working his way up through the ranks of the Cheka, OGPU and finally as leader of the NKVD. He carried out his orders with positive glee, dispatching traitors, spies and enemies of the state without a second thought. His first task as head of Stalin's new and evolved secret police force was to remove Kirov and to somehow sweep away the former leaders of the opposition. Yagoda was happy to oblige. Stalin may or may not have directly instigated the murder of Kirov, but he certainly benefited from such an event.

A vulnerable individual by the name of Leonid Nikolayev was chosen to assassinate Kirov with a pistol and, when his second attempt at the job was successful, Yagoda swooped in to interrogate the easily manipulated boy. After a prolonged period in which Nikolayev was severely tortured, he signed a statement claiming that leaders of the opposition, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Smirnov, were behind the assassination. When the accused men refused to confess to the crime, Stalin proceeded to issue the NKVD with new and even more terrifying powers of persuasion.

On 8 April, 1935 a new law was enacted allowing children as young as 12 years of age who were found guilty of crimes against the government to be punished in the same manner as an adult. This included the death penalty. If anyone refused to sign a confession statement the NKVD merely suggested that their children should be brought in for questioning - the dissident would almost always surrender immediately.

Further decrees were hastily drafted issuing yet more controls and capabilities to the influential secret police. Those committing terrorist acts were to be dealt with 'in an accelerated way' by the NKVD without the use of the judiciary, who might slow things up with irritating formalities such as lengthy appeal hearings. Death sentences would no longer be under the jurisdiction of the judges. Yagoda would oversee the execution as soon as the court had pronounced sentence. Stalin's new law was a devastating blow to justice, one that stipulated that. "The case will be heard with no participation by other parties. No appeals for quashing the verdict or for mercy will be allowed. The death sentence is to be carried out as soon as it has been pronounced."

Kamenev and Zinoviev were the first to fall under this new decree. Both were taken out and executed straight away. The promise given by Stalin to Kamenev before his confession was handed over regarding the safety of his two sons was a blatant lie and the boys were shot a short time later.

The NKVD now appeared to be an unstoppable juggernaut of violence, torture, oppression and cruelty, clearing the way for Stalin with a brutal ruthlessness never seen before. The leader's paranoia had been inflamed by rumours of potential takeovers, and the guilty verdict pronounced upon Zinoviev, Kamenev and 14 other supposed dissidents was the final straw, instigating the now infamous Great Purge.

The court case in 1936 was the first of three media-based farces known as the 'Show Trials'. Both prosecution and defence counsel speeches were delivered under the hot glare of a series of well-positioned spotlights and broadcasted to the nation. The foreign press, admitted into the courtroom to prove to the world that Russia was both fair and just in its dealings with terrorists, remained highly sceptical of the constant stream of willing confessions. No one appeared prepared

Hatch-cut cell doors line the many corridors on six floors at Lubyanka Prison

to fight against their accusers, with all of them readily admitting to their crimes.

1937 heralded the second theatrical court hearing. This time, 17 men were accused of working alongside Japan and Germany in a crazy bid to destroy the Soviet Government. Once again evidence was bountiful (ludicrously so) and it was wheeled into the courtroom on little carts or carried in by staggering clerks of the court, all under the gaze of the world's media. Confessions followed and were swiftly accompanied by hastily carried out executions. 'Justice' was indeed a smooth-running operation in Mother Russia.

No one, it seemed, was safe from the NKVD, not even NKVD members. Yagoda, the leader of this hostile secret police, had displeased Stalin since he had failed to gather enough evidence against Nikolai Bukharin, the editor of the official government newspaper. His scepticism over Stalin's long-term plans had reached the ear of the leader and he had subsequently raced to the top of the dissident hit list. Unfortunately, acquiring evidence of this was proving near impossible and Stalin was unimpressed with Yagoda's sudden ineptitude.

By the time of the third Show Trial, not only was Bukharin dragged before the court, but also Yagoda himself. Trumped-up charges against the former leader included the assassination of his predecessor Menzhinsky, failing to gather evidence against Bukharin due to his secret allegiance to the enemy of the state, failing to protect Kirov, and, finally, working with the Polish, German and Japanese secret intelligence organisations. This dramatic fall from grace was rounded off with a bullet in the back of his head, followed by the execution of his wife Lili for good measure. This led to a tempting new job opportunity and Stalin had just the right man in mind for the role.

At a mere five feet tall and with a crippled leg, Nikolai Yezhov had much to prove. Born in St Petersburg on 1 May 1895 the semi-illiterate tailor's assistant joined the Russian Army in 1915, fighting on the Eastern Front. Following the February Revolution he joined the Bolsheviks and became a member of the Red Army during the civil war. Having somehow wormed his way into Stalin's inner circle, Yezhov, who was known as 'the dwarf', was ultimately given the task of creating a new department within the NKVD entitled the Administration of Special Tasks, or AST.

By December 1936 the AST was fully operational, consisting of 300 of Yezhov's most reliable comrades, who would do his bidding without questioning the motives. Stalin couldn't have chosen a better man for the job. Yezhov was utterly loyal, extremely hardworking and completely lacking in any moral fibre. If Stalin required a task to be carried out, he would undertake the challenge no matter how repugnant or abhorrent the outcome. As the Great Purge raged on, Nikolai Yezhov became the poster boy for the NKVD's terrifying tactics.

The AST was set up to cleanse the NKVD of any members that might pose a threat to Stalin, either because of their reservations in his ever-growing violent mission or, more likely, because they knew too much to remain alive. Potential defectors were tracked down and apprehended by a secret Mobile Group working within the AST.

High-ranking intelligence officers working abroad were beginning to panic, particularly after the seemingly untouchable Yagoda had been

Joseph Stalin with Lavrentiy Beria. Stalin's daughter Svetlana sits happily on his lap, unaware that she is cuddling a monster

> **"THE AST WAS SET UP TO CLEANSE THE NKVD OF ANY MEMBERS THAT MIGHT POSE A THREAT TO STALIN, EITHER BECAUSE OF THEIR RESERVATIONS ABOUT HIS VIOLENT MISSION OR, MORE LIKELY, BECAUSE THEY KNEW TOO MUCH TO REMAIN ALIVE"**

arrested. During the summer of 1937 many such officers were called back to the Soviet Union and, under Yezhov's watchful eye, summarily executed. Those who attempted to defect were hunted down and made an example of. Boxes of chocolates laced with strychnine were sent to their wives and children. Meanwhile, other previously healthy NKVD veterans started having 'heart attacks'. The Communist Party may have initially made disparaging comments regarding the 'little dwarf', but by 1938 nobody was laughing at Stalin's tyrannous sidekick.

Deaths at the Gulags soared and the tactics used by the NKVD rapidly became more and more depraved. Prisoners were kept in windowless cells under blazing electric lights that remained burning throughout their ordeal. Each man was made to stand beneath the glaring lights without the opportunity to sit, let alone sleep. Such intolerable sleep deprivation, along with periods of starvation, ensured that they became disorientated and desperate. If this tactic failed to make the prisoner compliant, confessions were quickly obtained via brutal beatings with weighty truncheons. It is estimated that 1.3 million people were arrested that year and over 681,000 were subsequently shot. Yezhov moved away from the Lubyanka, choosing instead to have an abattoir built for his numerous executions. Logs were used to muffle the sound of bullets hitting the wall and hoses were installed to wash away the rivers of blood. To avoid an unhealthy build-up of bodies the corpses were promptly cremated.

The German Nazi Party watched the bloodshed with great interest. They were well aware of Stalin's growing paranoia and decided to use it to their advantage, slipping 32 forged documents into his hands. The papers 'proved' that the Russian leader's own Red Army was plotting against him and, as expected, Yezhov was sent in to root out and punish the disloyal commanders. Approximately 35,000 Russian soldiers were either banished or shot, while the Russo-German agreement was destroyed, leaving the Soviet Union in a highly vulnerable position.

Fear now surrounded the entire population and everyone from Stalin himself down to the lowest street worker lived under a toxic cloud of suspicion.

ANDREI VYSHINSKY

In his sharp suit, shiny shoes and little round spectacles, Stalin's favourite State Prosecutor may have appeared the picture of legal respectability, but looks could be deceiving

Andrei Vyshinsky was born in 1883 to a wealthy family in Odessa. He was an intelligent boy, studying at the University of Kiev before joining the Social Democratic Party. His aptitude for the law opened doors for him and it was not long before he had become professor of law and then rector at the University of Moscow. However, Vyshinsky's bullying character suited a career in the courtroom far more than the classroom.

His attitude towards defendants made him popular with the NKVD, who watched with amusement as he played with the accused like a cat toying with a mouse. When Vyshinsky became chief prosecutor he ensured that his dubious tactics were successful, claiming "confession is a queen over all sorts of evidence".

Such a sentiment was music to the NKVD's ears, and he was therefore an obvious choice as lead prosecutor during the infamous Show Trials, where he faced the cameras and took centre stage. His verbal sparring tied the opposition in knots, leaving the judges in no doubt as to his expectations. During the trial of Zinoviev and Kamanez he announced, "I demand that dogs gone mad should be shot."

After the war he became foreign minister, representing the Soviet Union at the United Nations before dying of natural causes in 1954.

The NKVD had infiltrated everywhere and the slightest suggestion of criticism more often than not ended in death. Such an oppressive atmosphere eventually began to affect morale and Stalin realised that it was time to rein in the violence, at least for a while. Yezhov had served his master well, but he had become exhausted and began to drink heavily. It was decided that a Deputy Commissar was required to help him run the NKVD, ostensibly to ease the burden, but in reality he had outlived his usefulness and Stalin wanted Yezhov out.

Understandably, Yezhov panicked. Stalin had chosen Lavrentiy Beria, a deeply unpopular and dangerous man, to support him in the day-to-day running of the NKVD, but Beria had no intention of playing second fiddle to any man, especially a drunken washed-up has been. Here was an ambitious supporter of Stalin's schemes, a slippery and cruel character who had already dispatched one of his former rivals.

Born on 29 March, 1899 in Abkhazia, Beria's mother was a deeply religious woman. Although he later claimed to be very close to her, her teachings clearly didn't dent the young psychopath's murderous proclivities.

Yezhov, the hunter of dissidents, had overnight become the hunted, and the pressure proved to be too much. Having engaged in one-night stands with common prostitutes and dangerous homosexual trysts, he began to unravel, giving Beria the ammunition he needed. Stalin's former executioner was arrested on 10 April 1939, and, having undergone extraordinary sessions of torture, confessed to being homosexual and therefore an enemy of the state. He was executed along with 345 other irritating flies in Stalin's ointment at the hands of those who had previously worked for him.

Beria was a ruthless monster, heartily despised by his own NKVD officers. He was considered to be merciless even by their brutal standards, and his sexual appetite was infamous. Under cover of darkness, the new leader of the NKVD had his driver cruise the streets looking for women. When one caught his eye, the driver was ordered to park the limousine, follow the girl on foot and, when the time was right, grab her and throw her in the back seat, where Beria waited like a spider in its web. The terrified woman was then repeatedly raped before being thrown out of the car.

However, Stalin needed the Russian people to calm down and Beria was ordered to, at least on the surface, give the impression of respectability and reasonableness. He showed the people exactly what they longed for, a witty, intelligent official, a kind father and a loving husband. The sadist was only revealed to those suspected dissidents unfortunate enough to catch his attention.

Reforms were put in place, such as a series of new police procedures publicly suggesting that the terror was finally over. It wasn't. Public trials, of which there were very few, were open and transparent with carefully prepared evidence but, behind the scenes, the violence raged on. In fact, under its new leader the NKVD was more brutal

A former Gulag in Pevek, Russia, acts as a grim reminder of the NKVD's deportation mission

THE CELLARS OF LUBYANKA

At the heart of Moscow, in Lubyanka Square, stood a structure that became the most infamous building in all of Russia

Built in 1897 for the All Russia Insurance Company, Lubyanka became the headquarters of the NKVD, the official centre of all their operations after the October Revolution. While NKVD chiefs took their offices on the luxurious third floor, nestled deep within the bowels of this imposing building was the infamous torture chamber, where many dissidents, including Yagoda, were 'processed' and forced into signing false confessions.

The edifice comprised of three separate buildings, but it was the central block, painted a sunny yellow, that terrified the people, for it was here that Lubyanka Prison was situated. Cells lined the forbidding corridors, but inmates were rarely there for any length of time since most ended up in the basement or sent off to the Gulags. The prison itself was eerily silent since guards were ordered not to speak to the inmates. In order to communicate with one another in the darkness they were taught to click their tongues in a grotesque form of Morse code.

This unnerving noise and the sound of their boots tapping across the floors was the only warning the prisoners were given that the guards were on their way.

SECCION MEDICA
LOS SERVICIOS, EXAMENES
Y CERTIFICADOS MEDICOS

Newspapers released images of the ice pick used by NKVD agent, Ramon Mercader to kill Leon Trotsky

Along with being charged as a German agent, Yagoda was also accused of corruption and diamond smuggling

and unforgiving. Beria took pride in carrying out his own torture claiming, "Let me have one night with him and I'll have him confessing he's the King of England."

Having been personally interrogated by him with his favourite torture weapons, the blackjack and the truncheon, Marshal Vasily Blyukher staggered to Lubyanka with a blood clot in his lung and his abdominal organs mashed beyond recognition. He had also been blinded in one eye. Such interrogations went on for several days, and if the prisoner was brave enough to withstand the ordeal their family, including any children, were often brought in for questioning. This final tactic proved to be a highly successful method of crushing the spirit, and confessions usually followed.

The NKVD had grown exponentially, both physically in the number of members working within its shady force and in its enormous, far-reaching powers. This pitiless secret police agency could easily touch those seemingly out of harm's way. Rudolf Klement's decapitated body was found floating in the Seine, while other enemies of the state were discovered and eliminated as far away as Switzerland. Of course, it was Leon Trotsky that Beria was truly after.

The NKVD undertook various elaborate attempts upon his life, and on 20 August 1940 it succeeded. Ramon Mercader, a staunch supporter of Stalin, smashed an ice pick into Trotsky's skull, inflicting a wound that killed him 24 hours later. At last all 15 leading figures implicated in the Russian Revolution were dead, with the exception of Joseph Stalin. Four had died under suspicious circumstances, while the remaining ten had been systematically executed.

Beria was hailed a hero. Having joined the Central Committee of the Communist Party, he became Deputy Prime Minister in 1941. However, the impending war meant that the mass deportation of 'enemies' was increased. Any potential threat to the security of Russia was forcibly removed through use of the NKVD troikas, or threesomes, who dealt with extrajudicial punishment. Those poor souls who were not executed straight away were transported under diabolical conditions, which often resulted in a slow, lingering death.

With the German attack on the Soviet Union in 1941, Stalin's pathological hatred turned to anyone with Germanic connections. Ethnic cleansing of the Volga Germans was swift and merciless. No minority group was safe from the xenophobic leader: Ukrainians, Poles, Crimean Tartars, Greeks, Turks and Latvians all fell under the terrifying efficiency of the NKVD. Mistakes were not to be tolerated. When one of Beria's men discovered that he had missed a small village of Tartars, he feared that his leader would punish him. In a blind panic he gathered the remaining villagers, comprising of women and children, and had them herded onto a large boat and sailed out onto the Azov Sea. He then ordered it to be sunk. If the secret police didn't kill them outright, then starvation or typhus picked them off one by one.

By 1943 the role of the NKVD had changed. Beria began using his men in a covert operation to infiltrate all levels of the Red Army in order to root out 'traitors, deserters and cowards'. The following year over 300,000 former Soviet POW's were vetted and 36,000 arrested. No one seemed to have a reason for this behaviour other than that they might be hostile. Heroes such as Senior Lieutenant Mikhail Petrovich Deviataev, who had fought bravely before being captured by the Germans, escaped only to be arrested by the NKVD and frog-marched to a Gulag. Their grotesque misuse of power was staggering, but more atrocities were to send shock waves around the world when the Germans made a sickening discovery.

15,000 Polish POW's had been rounded up by the NKVD back in 1940, but it was unknown where they had been moved to. Polish generals had asked a direct question as to their whereabouts but the answer had been unsatisfactorily vague. The Soviet Union simply denied knowledge of their location, claiming that they had freed themselves and had subsequently run off into the forests.

Three years later, a Nazi troop marching near Smolensk stumbled across a series of mass graves in the Katyn Forest. 4,000 bodies were discovered, including almost half the Polish officer corps, each with his hands tied behind his back. Having carried out autopsies, German doctors established that they had been coldly shot in the back of the head before being dumped into giant pits. The executions had probably been carried out at a secret abattoir owned by the NKVD in Smolensk and the bodies transported by trucks to the forest. Both American and British POW's were dragged to the site to witness the war crime and to then report back to their respective countries. The world was horrified, but media manipulation on the part of the Soviet Union saw to it that the Germans were blamed and the NKVD remained safely in the shadows. It was not until 1992 that President Boris Yeltsin, on behalf of Russia, admitted to the massacre and made a very public apology to Poland.

As the Second World War drew to an end, the terrifying NKVD was required to shapeshift once again. Beria remained in charge of security, but the organisation itself was now given ministerial status. The secret police agency was renamed the Soviet Ministry of State Security, or MGB, a far subtler force than its predecessor.

With the death of Stalin in 1953, Beria made a bold move to take control. It was a fatal mistake. The Soviet Union had hated him with a passion and had no intention of giving him even more power than he had already gathered. Other security organisations would follow but none would be given the freedom awarded to the most infamous of secret police. The time of the NKVD was finally at an end.

The last of the Show Trials, known as the Trial of the Twenty-One, occurred in 1938 and included Nikolai Bukharin and Genrikh Yagoda

THE POISON LABORATORY

The covert research centre had one deadly goal and an endless supply of 'guinea pigs' to practice on

The NKVD ran a secret development facility with the sole purpose of creating an odourless, tasteless, undetectable chemical that could be used to dispatch enemies of the state without leaving any trace of their crimes behind.

The first laboratory, named the Special Office, was overseen by Ignatii Kazakov and then Genrikh Yagoda. However, by the time Lavrentiy Beria became leader, it had changed its name to Laboratory 1.

It was during this time that prisoners of both sexes, all ages and varying physical conditions who had been selected from the Gulags were subjected to a variety of lethal concoctions including ricin, curare, cyanide, digitoxin and mustard gas. Each starving victim was offered a drink and meal heavily laced with a little something extra for medicinal purposes. The patient was then observed for side-effects and the poison rated for the excruciating pain it caused. After death, the body was removed and an autopsy carried out to see if the chemical could be detected.

Eventually, to the delight of the NKVD, scientists developed the deadly K-2, comprising of carbylamine choline chloride. Having been ingested, the victim appeared to physically shrink and become extremely weak before falling silent and dying in 15 minutes.

THE GREAT PURGES

In the second half of the 1930s, Stalin waged war on an illusory conspiracy of saboteurs, spies and political opponents that spread from the corridors of the Kremlin to the very ends of the Earth

WORDS: JAMES HOARE

The death was supposed to be silent, but Leon Trotsky screamed long and hard as the ice axe punched a hole through his skull. Showing the strength of character that had made him the enemy of Tsars and Stalinists alike, he grappled with his killer, spat in his face and bit down on his hand.

Trotsky's bodyguards reacted quickly, but it was too late - despite surgery, he died 25 hours later on 21st August, 1940 from shock and blood loss. His last manuscript, a biography of his nemesis Joseph Stalin, remained incomplete. It was fitting, though, that the act that killed its author would conclude one of the most infamous chapters in Stalin's long and vicious rule.

Many years before, at a dinner in the 1920s, the Bolshevik leadership had taken a break from the affairs of state and held a picnic. Idly, someone had asked, "What is the best thing in the world?"

"The greatest delight," Stalin had replied, "is to mark one's enemy, prepare everything, avenge oneself thoroughly and then go to sleep."

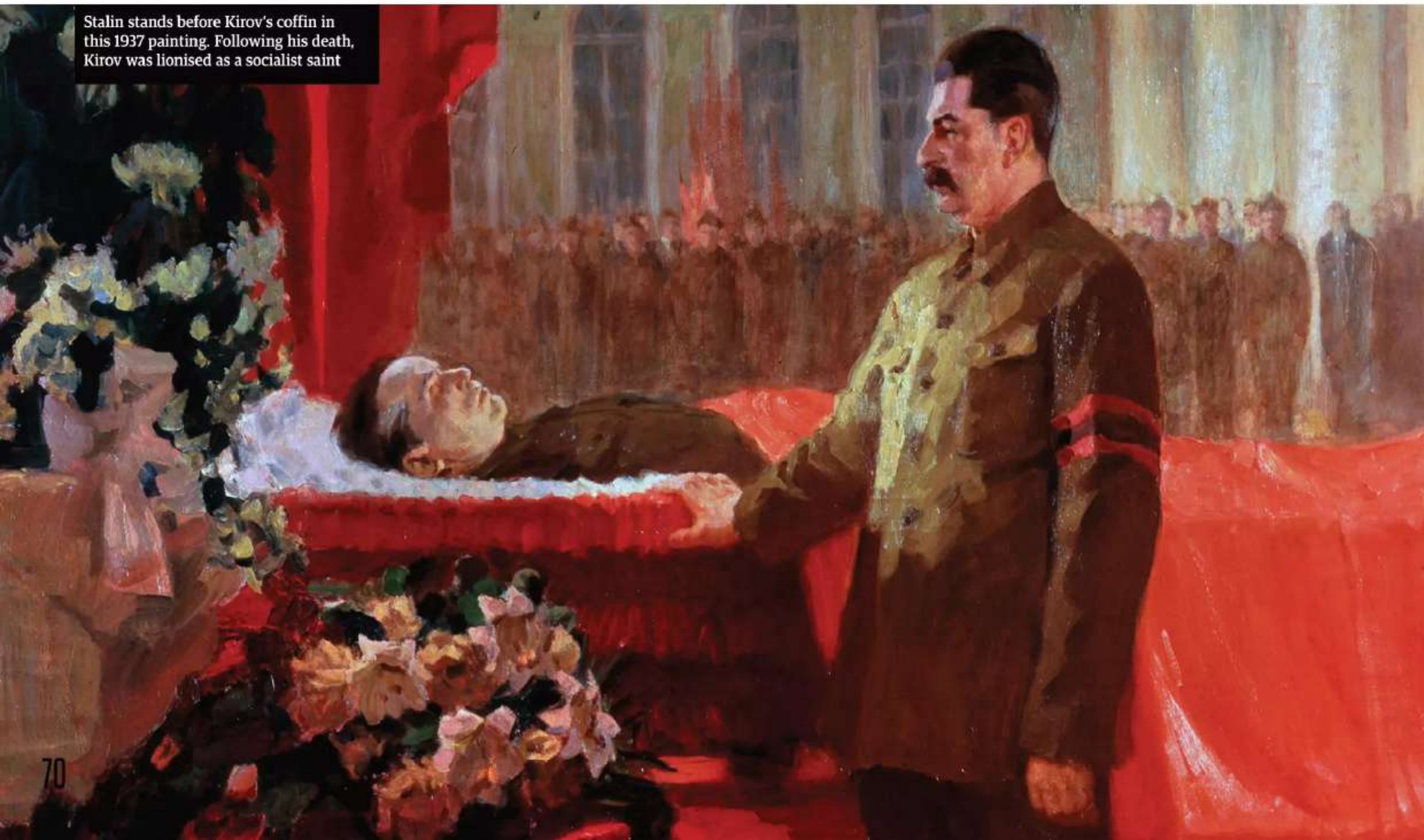
Stalin must have slept well the night of Trotsky's death. It was the culmination of a howling six-year crescendo of insecurity, paranoia and oppression that began with a murder much closer to home.

On a miserable December afternoon in 1934, Sergei Kirov - the energetic and charismatic boss of the Leningrad party - was walking to his office when he was shot dead. The bullet was fired at point-blank range through the back of his neck.

While the Great Purge, or Great Terror, commonly refers to the mass repressions of 1936-1938, they were, in fact, a series of operations that grew in tempo and intensity as they spread across the whole of the Soviet Union and across every social strata.

The murders of Kirov and Trotsky neatly bookend this, from Stalin's first move to geld his political rivals to the tying-up of 'loose ends' in 1940, just as the genocidal war with Nazi Germany had begun. Kirov's killer was disaffected former party functionary Leonid Nikolaev and, according to rumour, he had lashed out because Kirov was sleeping with his wife. But as party boss for Leningrad and trusted ally of Stalin, Kirov was denied anything so bourgeois as a crime of passion. Instead, news reports attributed his death to "the treacherous hand of an enemy of the working class". Stalin was genuinely distraught at the loss of his friend, but this didn't mean he wasn't prepared to exploit the tragedy and 'clear house' - and the enthusiasm with which he did so led some to suspect that he had perhaps orchestrated the murder himself.

Stalin ordered the NKVD (which had replaced the OGPU in 1934) to 'discover' that Kirov had been murdered by followers of his old ally turned



Stalin stands before Kirov's coffin in this 1937 painting. Following his death, Kirov was lionised as a socialist saint

Stalin with Kliment Viroshilov, who played a key role denouncing his own colleagues

As People's Commissar for Internal Affairs, Yezhov took pleasure in making Stalin's grand design a reality

rival, Grigory Zinoviev. The job was entrusted to Nikolai Yezhov, a Stalin loyalist and eager little psychopath, who promptly turned up a wide-ranging conspiracy of which there was no genuine evidence. In a series of trials carefully stage-managed by Stalin himself over 1934-1935, dozens of former political opponents - including Zinoviev and his brother-in-arms, Lev Kamenev - were hauled into the dock. Zinoviev and Kamenev were both imprisoned while dozens were shot and many more dispatched to the Gulag, a barbaric network of forced labour camps.

This state of fear and paranoia was almost entirely arbitrary. As Stalin upped the stakes with one hand, he made concessions with the other: the voting franchise was eventually widened to include those whose suspect social backgrounds had previously left them marginalised. 100,000 non-political prisoners were released, rationing ended, and peasants were given the right to farm private plots.

Totalitarianism needs a constant state of siege to function. It needs reasons to tighten rather than relax control. It needs a constant sense of encirclement by enemies beyond its borders and infiltration by enemies within to draw the people into the 'protection' of a strong leader. Stalin's 'enemies within' were those who had once stood by his side in the October Revolution and the Russian Civil War.

The Old Bolsheviks had risen through the ranks under Lenin. They had cultivated their own power bases and allies, and they had opinions... even if they bit them back. Some had supported the wrong side in previous power struggles and, despite their fall from grace, commanded respect, but even those who offered nothing but grovelling supplication remained a threat.

Their capital crime was to remember life before Stalin. They remembered how dependent he had once been on Zinoviev and Kamenev, and how he had only defeated Alexei Rykov and Nikolai Bukharin, and forced through Collectivisation, with the support of the Central Committee.

They remembered Trotsky and they remembered Lenin's damning testament.

An estimated 30-40,000 middle- and upper-level party functionaries began their careers prior to Stalin's takeover. They had to go, and, in 1935, Stalin turned Yezhov loose in the Kremlin.

Avel Enukidze was the influential Secretary of the Presidium of Central Executive Committee. He caused Stalin offence by not giving him a grand enough role in his niche history of Tsarist-era Bolshevik printing presses in the Caucasus and, worse still, he had said something unwise to Stalin about his timeframe for standing down. Enukidze was charged with treason and a whole terrorist network was 'uncovered' acting on behalf of Zinoviev, Kamenev and Trotsky. Some were even accused of plotting to kill Stalin, while others were accused of being directly involved in Kirov's murder.

Enukidze made it out alive, but would be shot two years later. Many of his allies were demoted, and for the first time friends and family of the accused found themselves facing charges. From here on, Stalin's purges would be indiscriminate and Yezhov was appointed head of the NKVD as a reward for his handling of the Kremlin trial.

It was a test of the potential for opposition as much as it was an attack on challengers. The Politburo blinked and offered only weak protest.

Contemporary events were beginning to bite and lend Stalin's intense paranoia an undercurrent of reason. The socialist government of Spain had been overthrown by a fascist coup, and the ensuing Spanish Civil War had demonstrated to Stalin the

"CONTEMPORARY EVENTS, SUCH AS THE SPANISH COUP, LENT STALIN'S INTENSE PARANOIA AN UNDERCURRENT OF REASON"

role that Nazi Germany, along with homegrown rivals, might play in hurling him from office.

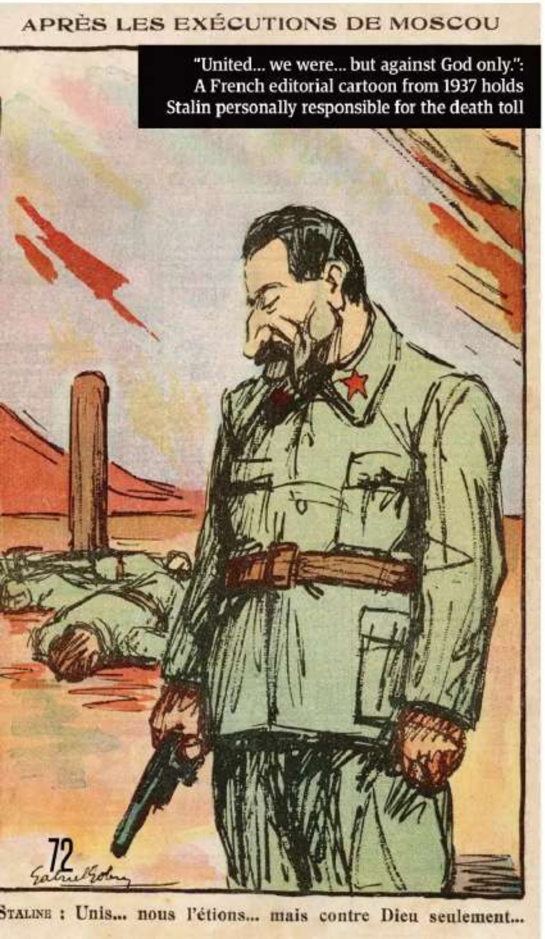
He also watched in frustration as Britain and France did nothing to either defend the democratically elected government of Spain or oppose Hitler's remilitarisation. In the West, Poland, Hungary, Romania and Yugoslavia sought to find favour with the Führer, and in the East the Empire of Japan threatened its long border with Manchuria.

Stalin's new attack dog set about refashioning his new domain in his master's image. Yezhov's predecessor as torturer-in-chief, Genrikh Yagoda, was accused of corruption, diamond smuggling and working as a German agent. Yezhov even accused him of sprinkling mercury around his office in an attempt to poison him, and blamed him for the murder of novelist Maxim Gorky and his son.

Yagoda's apartments and dacha were ransacked, turning up evidence of a deviant inner life: a cache of pornography and sex toys, women's fur coats and cashmere scarves, and, most shocking of all, literature written by Leon Trotsky.

Those officers seen as 'Yagoda's men' were dispatched to the remote corners of the Soviet Union on official business and arrested en route. In total, some 3,000 NKVD officers were executed, although it would have given their victims little satisfaction: things got worse, not better.

"There will be some innocent victims in this fight against fascist agents," Yezhov said. "We are launching a major attack on the enemy; let there be no resentment if we bump someone on the elbow. Better that 10 innocent people should suffer than one spy get away. When you chop wood, chips fly." In 1936 the Great Terror began in earnest and the chips did indeed begin to fly. Zinoviev and Kamenev were accused of running the Anti-Soviet United Trotskyist-Zinovievite Centre, with many other party members caught in Yezhov's sweep. In a particularly surreal scene, one man in prison at the time of Kirov's murder was accused of personally pulling the trigger.


APRÈS LES EXÉCUTIONS DE MOSCOU

"United... we were... but against God only.": A French editorial cartoon from 1937 holds Stalin personally responsible for the death toll

STALINE : Unis... nous l'étions... mais contre Dieu seulement...

One of the men in this photo has been defaced, a victim of the purge

Zinoviev and Kamenev asked for a meeting with the Politburo, but they got a meeting with Stalin and his pet general Kliment Voroshilov instead.

"You want to depict members of Lenin's Politburo and Lenin's personal friends to be unprincipled bandits, and present the party as a snake's nest of intrigue, treachery and murderers," gasped Zinoviev, hopelessly.

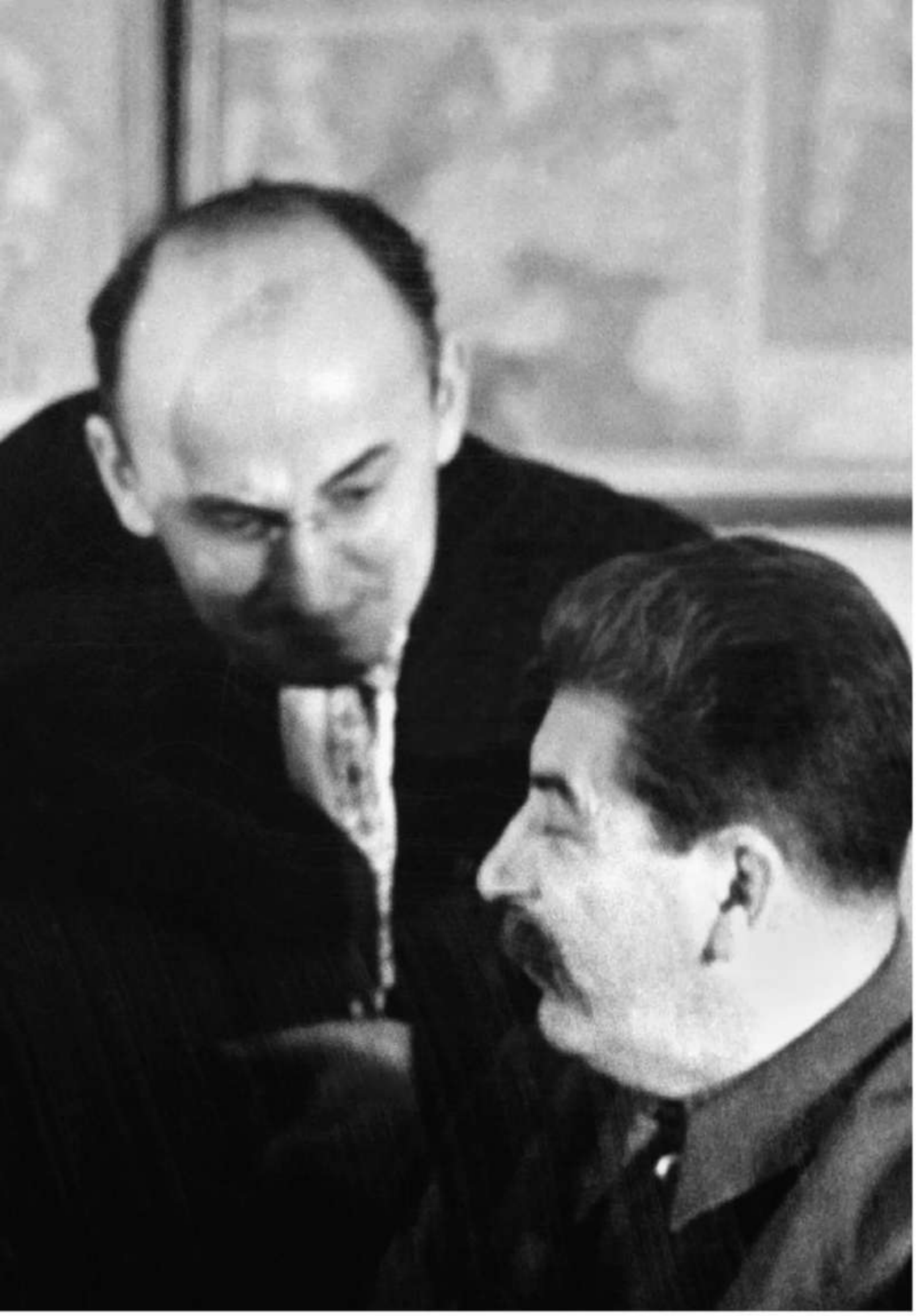
Stalin replied that the witch hunt was not aimed at them, but against Trotsky, "the sworn enemy of the party."

With few options left, the two elder statesmen of the Old Bolsheviks said they were prepare to "confess" their crimes if their lives and the lives of their families were spared. Stalin accepted the deal, watched them plead guilty, and then had them shot.

Former minister Mikhail Tomsky was implicated in Zinoviev and Kamenev's confession and killed himself in his dacha rather than give Stalin the satisfaction of making him suffer.

Old Bolsheviks abroad chose a poor time to remind Stalin of their existence and Trotsky released his damning critique, *The Revolution Betrayed: What Is the Soviet Union and Where Is It Going?* from his exile in Norway just as news of the purge broke. His son, Leon Sedov, quickly led the charge with his own indictment, *The Red Book on the Moscow Trials*.

The Norwegian government found itself under intense pressure from the Kremlin and, facing threats of economic sanctions, tried to curb Trotsky's political activism. True to stubborn form, Trotsky refused to keep quiet and smuggled out an article entitled *The Moscow "Confessions"* that



SABOTAGE IN SHAKHTY

The first show trial of Stalin's regime saw him fabricate evidence and play judge, jury and executioner

Unrealistic production targets and poor management from Bolshevik apparatchiks parachuted in by Moscow had created a culture where industrial accidents were routine, and Stalin's eye was caught by a series of accidents at coal mines in Shakhty, south-western Russia, in 1928. The OGPU already had the senior engineers under surveillance and found no evidence of wrongdoing, but Stalin was insistent and charged them to find evidence of an underground organisation committing acts of sabotage on behalf of the mine's former owners overseas. The accused were tortured into false confessions and documents were forged to prove foreign influence. Eleven death sentences were handed out and many more were imprisoned, with Stalin dictating the sentences personally.

This was the first of many purges over three years against technicians and specialists on bogus charges of belonging to the Industrial Party. They were accused of planning to deliberately engineer a crisis, which they would then use to take power.

Like the purges that came later, the Shakhty show trial instilled a culture of cautious mediocrity: engineers grew terrified of getting noticed, taking the initiative, or making decisions that might come back to haunt them.

refuted "evidence" of contact between himself and his alleged collaborators, and bemoaned the humiliating coerced confessions.

Trotsky was deported from Norway in December 1936 and settled in Mexico City on the invitation of sympathetic local socialists. In a moment of eerie foreshadowing, he wrote from the ship that "Stalin conducts a struggle on a totally different plane. He seeks to strike not at the ideas of the opponent, but *at his skull*."

In January 1937, another far-reaching Trotskyist conspiracy was 'uncovered', dragging more Old Bolsheviks into the firing line and they obligingly implicated Bukharin and Rykov, the last of Stalin's old rivals. A total of 13 were executed and the rest were murdered in prison. This new phase in the purge was accompanied by a huge propaganda campaign and public meetings where workers in every factory, workshop or shipyard read the confessions and denounced the traitors through bared teeth. Once again, the Politburo failed to curb Stalin's excesses. Alone of their number, his old Georgian comrade Sergo Ordzhonikidze refused to authorise the arrests of those who looked to him for protection. Returning home on 17th February, 1937, he found NKVD officers raiding his apartment. Outraged, Ordzhonikidze rang Stalin and the two argued loudly.

The next morning his wife, Zinaida Pavlutskaya, heard a single gunshot in the bedroom. His cause of death was given as a heart attack and his retinue was promptly purged.

With the party and the NKVD now gutted by Stalin and Yezhov, they turned their gaze to the Red Army. Alone of the Soviet institutions, it had survived the previous few decades as a world unto itself. Once Trotsky's domain, most of the senior staff had served under him during the Civil War and, in the event of invasion, Stalin was convinced that the Red Army would turn against him. What's more, they were openly disdainful of his protégé, Voroshilov, whom they felt had been promoted well beyond his unremarkable means to People's Commissar for Defence of the Soviet Union.

In May 1937, Yezhov contrived a new military-fascist conspiracy centred around Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky. A superb military theorist, he had developed the 'Deep Operations' doctrine that would be the foundation of the Soviet fightback in World War II. It was probably testament to his reputation as a strategist that the NKVD found an ally in German intelligence who obligingly fabricated evidence that he had been passing state secrets to the Wehrmacht.

"NIKOLAI YEZHOV MAINTAINED IT WAS 'BETTER THAT 10 INNOCENT PEOPLE SHOULD SUFFER THAN ONE SPY GET AWAY'"

Three of the Red Army's five marshals were executed, 15 of the 16 commanders of armies, all corps commanders, almost all divisional or brigade commanders, half of all regimental commanders, and all army commissars. An additional 35,000 officers were sacked.

Around the same time, Stalin broke with his tradition of writing cod-Leninist screed in *Pravda* and instead showed something of his increasingly embattled thought process. His article, *Certain Insidious Recruitment Techniques Used by Foreign Intelligence*, ran across three pages. In it, he outlined a series of (most likely fictional) scenarios that showed just how easy it was for your friends, neighbours or trusted authority figures to be bent to the will of the enemy.

Commissar for Foreign Trade Arkady Rosengolts exclaimed in an unguarded moment that Stalin was "suspicious to the point of insanity".

Ominously, that quote comes from his NKVD case file and, in March 1937, he joined the defendants in what became known as the Trial of the 21, a final tying-up of loose ends from the previous investigations. Bukharin, Rykov, Yagoda and 18 others were accused of belonging to a nefarious 'Bloc of Rightists and Trotskyites' responsible for, amongst other ills, attempting to assassinate both Lenin and Stalin.

THE PLOT IN TSARITSYN

In a remote corner of the Civil War, Stalin gained a taste for conspiracy

Stalin had been dispatched to Tsaritsyn in the south of Russia to hold off the White Army assault, and took credit for the successful defence of the city (later renamed Stalingrad, and then Volgograd).

Stalin chafed under the command of Trotsky's Revolutionary Military Council, and in particular resented the 'specialists' – former Tsarist officers retained by Trotsky, despite their suspect social backgrounds and loyalties, because of their expertise.

He quickly 'uncovered' an anti-Bolshevik conspiracy and used the Tsaritsyn Cheka – the predecessor to the OGPU and NKVD – to round up numerous specialists and have them executed, and replaced them with ideologically reliable non-commissioned officers, among them Kliment Voroshilov.

Tsaritsyn became Stalin's private kingdom, into which the Revolutionary Military Council had little purview. Trotsky was furious and both Stalin and Trotsky wrote letters to Lenin to bring him around to their own point of view. In 1919, Trotsky wrote that Stalin's policy in Tsaritsyn was "a most dangerous ulcer, worse than any [alleged] treason or betrayal by the military specialists."

Stalin was eventually recalled, but Lenin didn't press the matter of the Tsaritsyn purge.

They were executed and thousands of their 'accomplices' were imprisoned.

With the Politburo rubber stamping all his decisions, Stalin, together with Yezhov, enshrined the bloodiest phase of the Great Terror in law. In the summer of 1937, torture was officially sanctioned as a means of gaining confession. Trial procedures were vastly simplified with the use of troikas of the local party boss, local prosecutor and local NKVD chief, who would sit as judge and jury, and fulfil regional quotas for arrests.

Finally, a resolution singled out those born in Poland or born to Polish parents as potential fifth columnists – it would be the first of many acts to explicitly target the USSR's myriad national minorities. The resolutions of 1937 greatly widened the scope of the repression, taking the purges from the corridors of power and out into the countryside. The quotas – which asked for 400,000 to be sent to the Gulag and 70,000 to be shot in the first phase – were treated much as Stalin's grain quotas and industrial targets had been. Failure was not an option – in fact, regional managers were invited to wildly overachieve.

On 2nd June, Stalin addressed the Defence Commissar's Council, and fired the starting pistol on his new, wider Great Terror:

"Every party member, honest non-member, and citizen of the USSR has not only the right but also the duty to report any failings that he notices. If only 5% are true, it will still be worthwhile." "Anti-Soviet elements" were the first to face the firing squad: kulaks, former White officers and sympathisers, former Tsarist officials and Mensheviks, political prisoners in the Gulags, and those political prisoners who had since been released. Long lukewarm on the idea of 'world revolution', Stalin turned on Comintern next. Communist International was an organising body for overseas communist parties, through which their actions were coordinated, propaganda lines handed down and military aid distributed. Like the Old Bolsheviks, many of their senior members owed nothing to Stalin and had their own agendas. Furthermore, it had been the pet project of first Trotsky and then Bukharin.

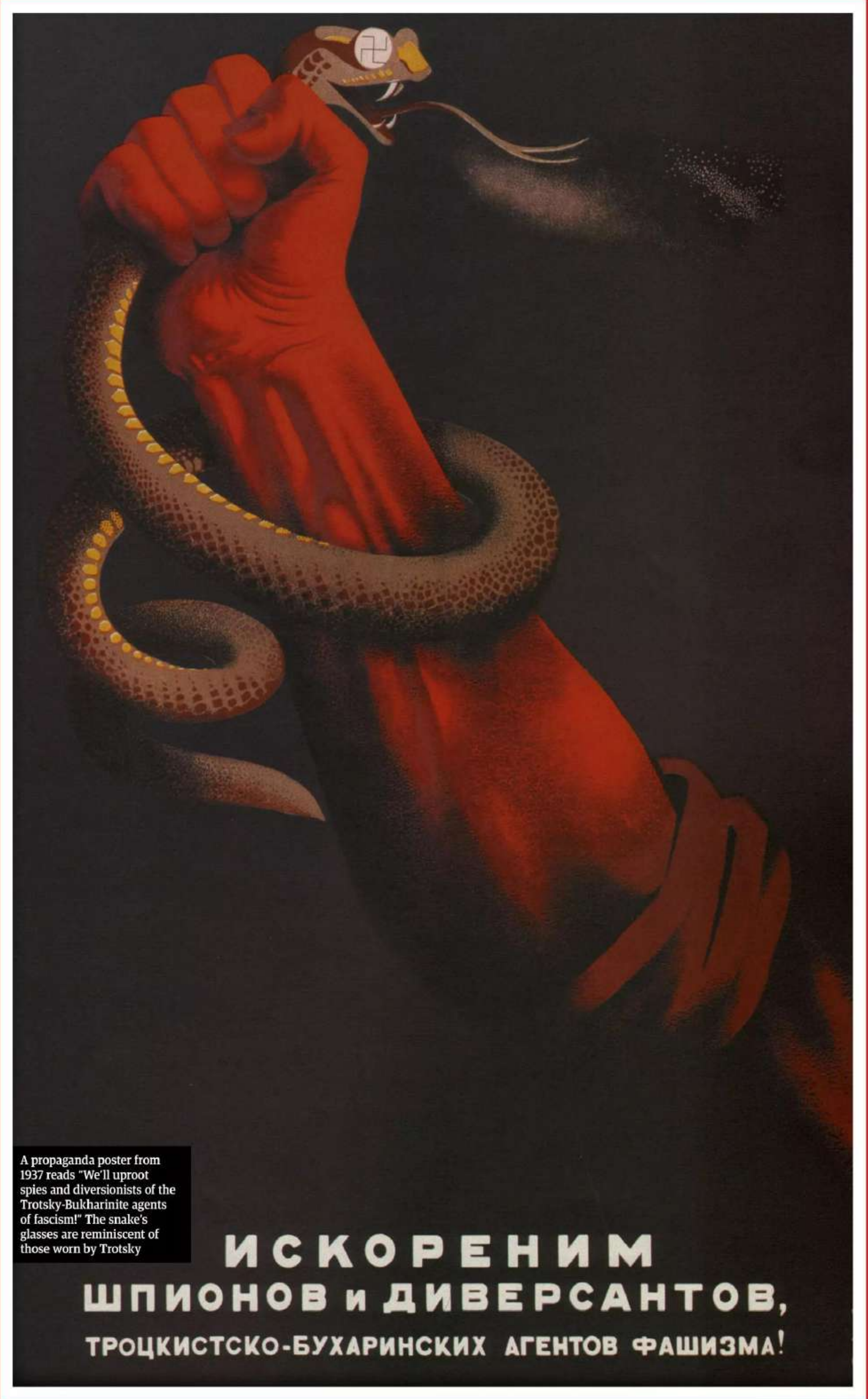
With relations with Germany thawing ahead of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Stalin saw it as a good opportunity to signal his good faith: thousands of German communists who had fled the Nazis were repatriated into the welcoming arms of the Gestapo, Polish communists were executed and the entire Polish party disbanded.

The exiles were based at Moscow's Hotel Lux and the NKVD came every night to claim their victims. The stress of waiting night after night for a knock at the door was so great that many flung themselves to their deaths in the internal courtyard, a problem that grew so endemic that grills had to be placed over the windows.

This was echoed overseas. In Spain, Alexander Orlov, the NKVD liaison to the socialist Republicans, presided over the criminalisation of the openly Trotskyist Workers' Party of Marxist Unification (POUM) and the arrest and execution of its members, including its leader Andrés Nin Pérez, who was tortured under Orlov's supervision.

Senior Spanish communist Jesus Hernández later recalled: "Nin was not giving in. He was resisting until he fainted. His inquisitors were getting impatient. They decided to abandon the dry method to get results. Then the blood flowed, the skin peeled off, muscles torn, physical suffering pushed to the limits of human endurance. Nin

Trotsky in a hospital bed following his death, 1940


ИСКОРЕНИМ
ШПИОНОВ и ДИВЕРСАНТОВ,
ТРОЦКИСТСКО-БУХАРИНСКИХ АГЕНТОВ ФАШИЗМА!

A propaganda poster from 1937 reads "We'll uproot spies and diversionists of the Trotsky-Bukharinite agents of fascism!" The snake's glasses are reminiscent of those worn by Trotsky was subjected to cruel pain of the most refined tortures. In a few days his face was a shapeless mass of flesh." Two of Trotsky's secretaries disappeared, one in Spain and another in France, while Austrian Trotskyist Kurt Landau and numerous exiled Mensheviks were assassinated across Europe. Another possible target - Trotsky's son, Lev Sedov - died in Paris in February 1938 from complications during surgery following an attack of appendicitis. He was driven to a private hospital rather than his usual doctor by an undercover NKVD agent embedded in his circle of friends, fuelling rumours of murder. Purges sprung up across the vastness of the Soviet Union, affecting different communities and industries with idiosyncratic results as branch offices of the NKVD worked themselves into a frenzy to hit targets or else become the targets. Accidents, grudges or careless words in the wrong ears were used to incriminate the innocent, while torture, sleep deprivation and threats to shake down family members resulted in rolling denunciations that spread through social and professional networks like a virus.

In one case, a railway accident in Siberia that killed 14 passengers resulted in 72 railway officials being accused of sabotage and executed. In another, an academic spat among astronomers at the Pulkovo Observatory near Leningrad presented an opportunity for a rival to do away with his cantankerous colleague, Boris Gerasimovich. He had published work in foreign science journals and was therefore highly suspect, kicking off a round of forced confessions that ended with 20% of Soviet astronomers being arrested or executed as foreign spies.

Between August 1937 and November 1938 - the period that the Great Terror was at its height - 1.6 million people were arrested and 700,000 shot. That's 1,500 deaths by firing squad every single day. Yezhov dominated Stalin's time: the two spent 850 hours together over 290 meetings, and 15,000 notes and reports were sent by Yezhov to Stalin on which he scribbled notes such as, "You don't have to 'check', you need to arrest."

In November 1938, conscious of the looming war in Europe and the damage now being wrought upon the Soviet economy, Stalin put his mad dog down as a scapegoat. He accused Yezhov of ramping up the paranoia and misery as part of a counter-revolutionary organisation operating within the NKVD. Stalin later explained: "Yezhov was a beast! A degenerate [...] many innocent lives were lost. That's why we shot him." Indeed, Yezhov was spiralling and by 1938 he was lost to alcoholism and depression. At his trial he revelled in the carnage, especially within the NKVD itself, saying, "I have purged 14,000 [NKVD officers], but my only guilt is that I haven't purged them enough." Yet Stalin had directed every arrest and execution, and stage-managed every show trial. If Yezhov was a beast, then Stalin trained him to kill, starved him to keep him mean, and then finally took him off the leash.

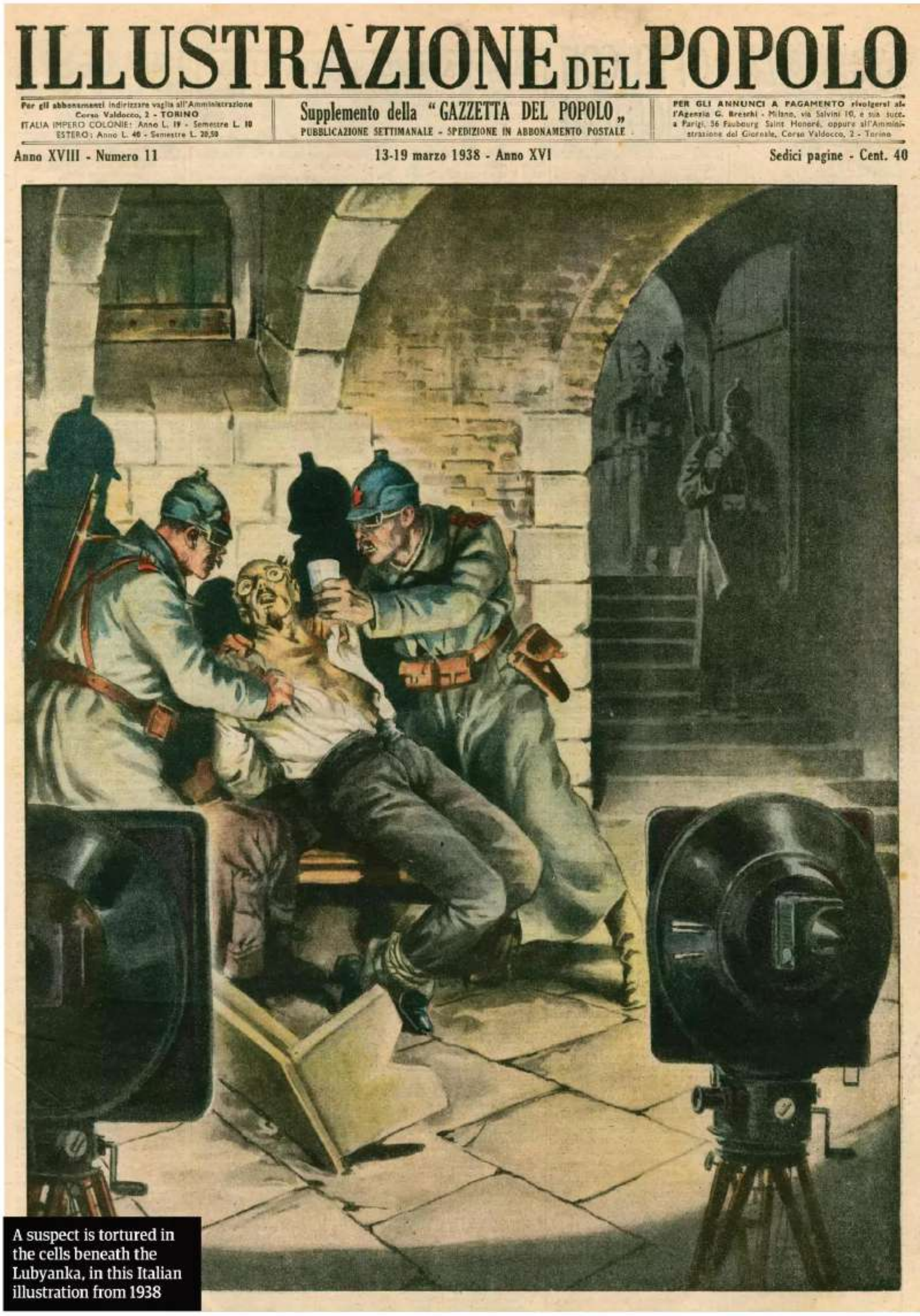


ILLUSTRAZIONE DEL POPOLO

Per gli abbonamenti indirizzare vaglia all'Amministrazione
Corso Valdocco, 2 - TORINO
ITALIA IMPERO COLONIE: Anno L. 19 - Semestre L. 10
ESTERO: Anno L. 40 - Semestre L. 20,50

Supplemento della "GAZZETTA DEL POPOLO"
PUBBLICAZIONE SETTIMANALE - SPEDIZIONE IN ABBONAMENTO POSTALE

PER GLI ANNUNCI A PAGAMENTO rivolgersi all'Agenzia G. Breschi - Milano, via Salvini 10, e sua succ. a Parigi, 56 Faubourg Saint Honoré, oppure all'Amministrazione del Giornale, Corso Valdocco, 2 - Torino

Anno XVIII - Numero 11

13-19 marzo 1938 - Anno XVI

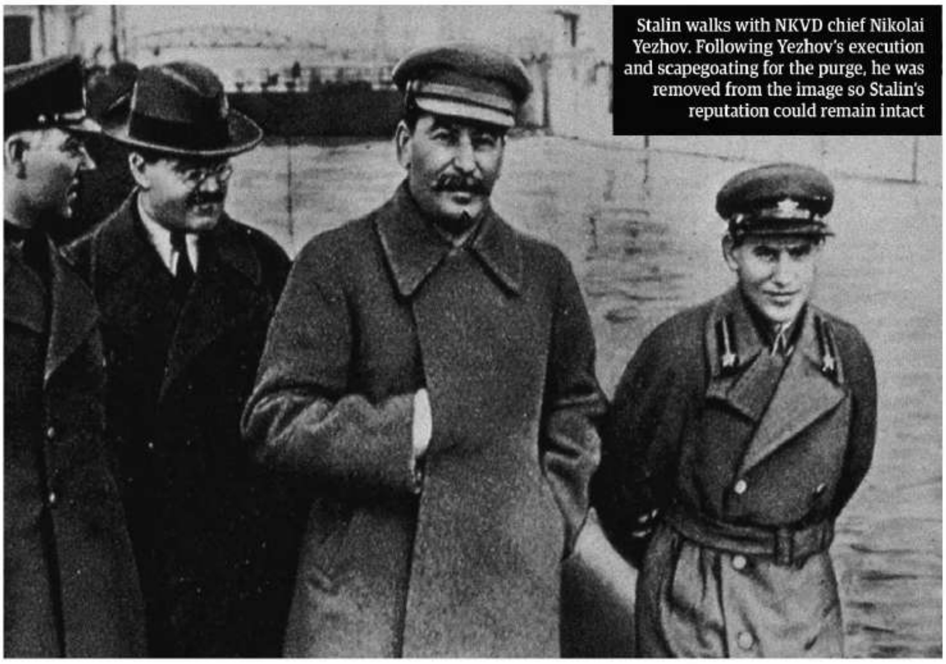
Sedici pagine - Cent. 40

A suspect is tortured in the cells beneath the Lubyanka, in this Italian illustration from 1938

Just as the pervert Yagoda was replaced by the psychopath Yezhov, Yezhov was replaced in turn by Lavrentiy Beria, who would dwarf his predecessors in vile acts and inhumanity.

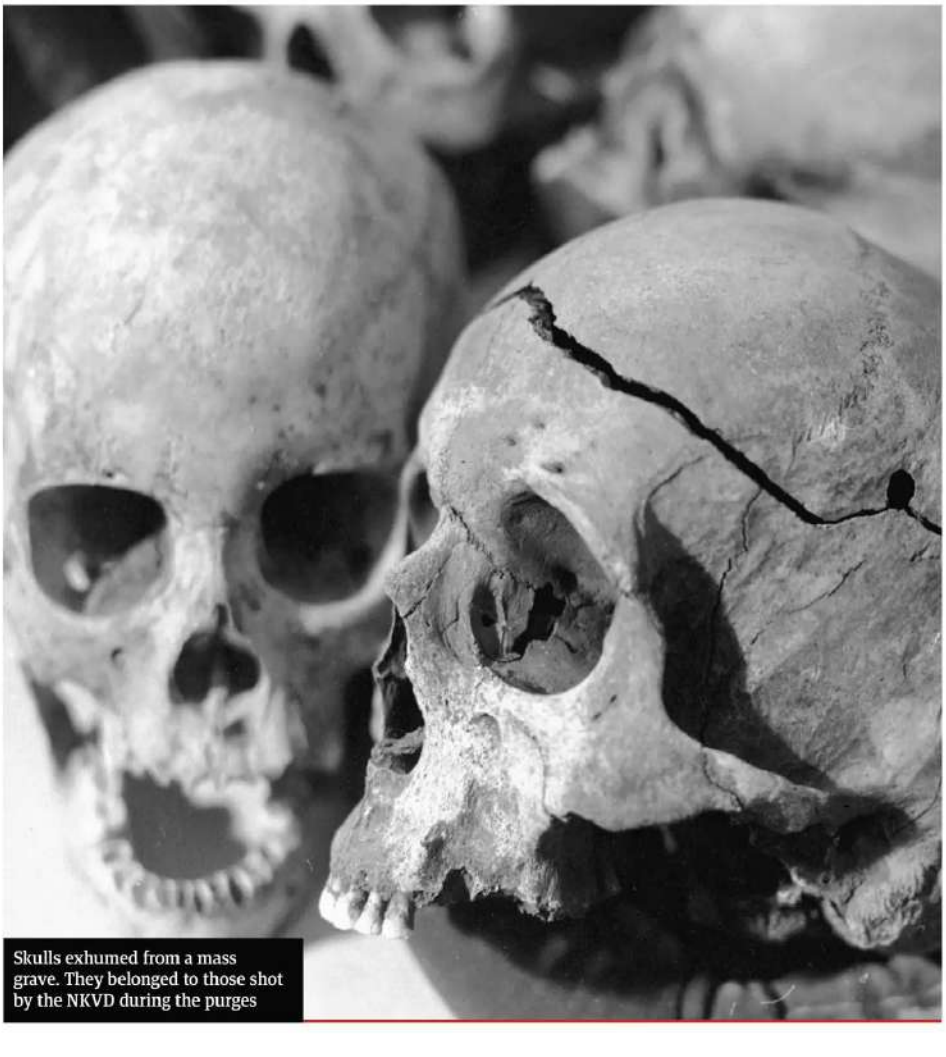
Stalin turned his - and Beria's - attention to their final piece of unfinished business. Stalin had made a mistake in exiling Trotsky, fearing execution or imprisonment would make him a martyr, but the last of the Old Bolsheviks and the would-be heir to Lenin had rallied a global network of Trotskyists (known as the Fourth International) around him. He remained outspoken in his bitter criticisms of Stalin and the direction in which he had taken the Soviet Union. Addressing a hearing in the US in 1937, Trotsky issued a challenge: "Why does Moscow so fear the voice of a single man? Only because I know the truth, the whole truth. Only because I have nothing to hide. [...] the Moscow Trials are a conscious and premeditated frame-up, constructed with the bones and nerves of human beings [...] Do the accusers of the Kremlin hear me? I throw my defiance in their faces. And I await their reply!" He didn't have to wait long.

Spanish communist Ramón Mercader had been recruited to the NKVD in 1936 and began infiltrating Trotskyist circles in 1938. In 1939 he moved to Mexico to get closer to the man himself in the guise of a Canadian called Frank Jacson (the NKVD managed to misspell 'Jackson' on the fake passport). This was one of two plots personally approved by Stalin, with the first - a bold frontal assault by a team of assassins who raked the fortified Trotsky residence with gunfire - failing to claim its target. Mercader made himself useful around the Trotsky home, proving himself a good friend and devoted student of his political ideals. Finally, on 20th August, 1940, he found himself alone with Trotsky in his study, where he took his life. Armed with a gun and knife, he struck with an ice axe - one used for moving blocks of ice in warehouses, not, as is popularly assumed, for mountain climbing - hoping to kill the old man quietly and escape. Trotsky's wife, Natalia Sedova, recorded her husband's halting words as they frantically called for medical aid: "This time... they've succeeded." The Great Purges were over, replaced by a new and terrible crisis: war.



Stalin walks with NKVD chief Nikolai Yezhov. Following Yezhov's execution and scapegoating for the purge, he was removed from the image so Stalin's reputation could remain intact

> **"ZINOVIEV AND KAMENEV AGREED TO CONFESS THEIR "CRIMES" IF THEIR LIVES WERE SPARED. STALIN ACCEPTED THE DEAL, WATCHED THEM PLEAD GUILTY, AND THEN HAD THEM SHOT"**



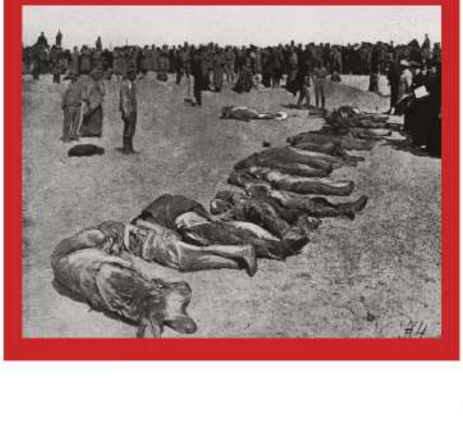
Skulls exhumed from a mass grave. They belonged to those shot by the NKVD during the purges

GLORY TO THE RED TERROR

Stalin was vicious, but he was only doing as Lenin taught him

In December 1917, Felix Dzerzhinsky was appointed head of the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for Combating Counter-Revolution and Sabotage - the Cheka, the ancestor of the NKVD. With the outbreak of the Russian Civil War, the Bolshevik secret police began a violent and chaotic repression of anyone they suspected of being an ally to the counter-revolutionary White Army, an anti-Bolshevik coalition of monarchists and aristocrats, democratic liberals and the deeply religious. The Red Terror was crude and horrifying, and it was ordered by Lenin, who insisted on public displays of barbarity. Hostages were taken, civilians were executed en masse, villages were looted and burned, and atrocities were commonplace, especially scalpings, crucifixions and flaying.

In one account, the Cheka fed White officers into tanks of boiling water or furnaces, while elsewhere prisoners were stripped naked and rolled around in barrels filled with nails. In one village they were bound in the street and water was poured over them until they became encased in an agonising sheet of ice. The number of victims of Lenin's Red Terror is impossible to verify, with the conservative estimates from 1917 to 1922 falling between 200,000 and 400,000.



THE NAZI-SOVIET PACT

In the summer of 1939, Stalin would conspire with Nazi Germany to divide Eastern Europe - an unlikely alliance that would drag the world into chaos

WORDS: MATT ROBINSON

Although there is no evidence that the two most infamous dictators of the 20th century ever met, they came close. In 1913, as a destitute Adolf Hitler struggled to survive while selling paintings in Vienna, Austria, the future Soviet leader arrived in the city to foment revolution from afar and pen an influential polemic entitled *'Marxism and the National Question'*. Claimed by his opponents to bear the stamp of fellow Bolshevik exile Lenin's authorship, the pamphlet would come to serve as the basis for Stalin's reputation as an expert on the subject of national identities. Following the 1917 Bolshevik revolution, Stalin was appointed the People's Commissar for Nationalities. In his new role, he was tasked with consolidating the Bolshevik 'sphere of influence' with regard to the land and resources lost in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk that concluded Russia's involvement in the First World War. De-imperialising the old Tsarist empire without allowing its disintegration into separate nations would prove to be problematic.

As Finland, a former autonomous duchy of the Russian Tsar, was granted independence and Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia became independent republics, what would become the western edge of Soviet control in Europe retreated. The disastrous result of the Polish-Bolshevik war in 1921 (the Polish border had advanced 200km eastwards) proved a personal embarrassment for Stalin, who requested to be removed from military matters - a request that was quickly granted. The rout of Red Army forces and annihilation of all three field armies would largely put an end to hopes for a Europe-wide Bolshevik revolution for some time. Following his assumption of power in 1924, Stalin would

Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov (left) and Nazi Foreign Minister Ribbentrop meet in Berlin, 1940

> **"THE PACT BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND NAZI GERMANY WAS LARGELY INSPIRED BY A SHARED INTEREST, NAMELY REMAKING EASTERN EUROPE AT THE EXPENSE OF POLAND"**

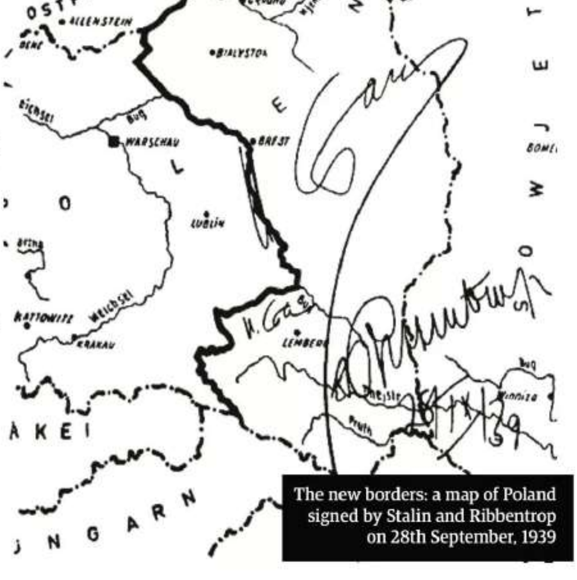
Nazi SS chief Heinrich Himmler greets Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov (second from left) in Berlin, November 1940

espouse an official policy of strengthening the Soviet Union internally – so-called 'Socialism in One Country'. Bureaucratic reshuffling would evolve into wholesale purges, rapid industrialisation would lead to the deaths of millions, and famine and terror would become the staple Soviet diet. Stalin's closing of the ranks would see a much more concentrated Soviet state emerge. Albeit rich in natural resources, the Red Tsar's domain was still lacking in technological expertise, machinery and the advanced weaponry that might help avoid a repeat of the disastrous result of the Polish-Bolshevik conflict.

Starting in 1922, the two pariah states of the post-Versailles landscape, the Soviet Union and Germany, engaged in an official political and economic relationship, formalised as the Treaty of Rapallo. Confirmed as a neutrality pact in Berlin in 1926, this accord would be extended for another five years in 1931. With the support of German industrialists, the Soviet Union received the machinery and goods necessary for the production of tanks, aeroplanes and poisonous gas. In return, German Reichswehr forces were allowed to use Soviet territory for the purposes of a secret military cooperation. Military testing and training could be carried out away from the prying eyes of inspectors checking for Germany's adherence to the Treaty of Versailles. What had begun as mutual recognition and renouncing of military aims against each other, largely inspired by a shared interest in remaking Eastern Europe at the expense of Poland, developed into an intricate agreement involving the exchange of military secrets, training and machinery for raw materials and help in subverting sanctions. This was a precedent that would set the tone of the German-Soviet relationship throughout the 1930s.

Although National Socialism would play no part in Stalin's ascendency, an opposition to and eventual opportunistic cooperation with the Soviet Union would expedite the infancy and growth of Hitler's movement, with some authors controversially claiming Stalin's personal involvement in ensuring Hitler's early successes. Both the communists and National Socialists certainly shared a common cause in the years of Weimar Germany: to destabilise and evict the government and ruling Social Democratic party. This shared goal would often translate into alignment on political, legislative and paramilitary fronts. Communists and Nazis would sometimes march together, vote together and, following the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, many communists would turn into National Socialists. Absorbed into the National Socialist movement, some sought to escape imprisonment, others professed genuine ideological conversion. These former Red Front fighters even earned a special name: Beefsteak Nazis – brown on the outside, red on the inside. No doubt some were infiltrators, while others recognised the dangerous similarities of the two movements. Simply put, the two movements could speak a similar language.

The pact the two movements would enter into in 1939 would ultimately come at the expense of ideology – Hitler's testament *Mein Kampf* is clear in his pronouncement of the Soviet Union as the state most hostile to German interests, citing international bolshevism and a world Jewish conspiracy as poisonous bedfellows. The Nazi leader rarely made a secret of his desire to establish Lebensraum for the German Volk in the east. The lowest point in diplomatic relations between the two states came in 1936: not only would Hitler's government and the Soviet Union fight a de-facto proxy war against each other on Spanish soil, aiding forces in a near-three-year-long civil war, but Nazi Germany and Japan would also sign the Anti-Comintern Pact to fighting



The new borders: a map of Poland signed by Stalin and Ribbentrop on 28th September, 1939

German General Heinz Guderian and Soviet Commander Semyon Krivoshein at a joint Nazi-Soviet victory parade in Brest, Poland, 1939

International Communism. Hitler's Weltanschauung would, however, soon necessitate an unusual diplomatic compromise. As Nazi Germany became increasingly isolated in its belligerence in the late 1930s, the state of the country's economy quickly came into question. Preparing to fight an expansionist war in Eastern Europe, specifically Poland, and ever-wary of the French and British threat - especially the latter blocking naval imports - Germany had little room for economic manoeuvring. It needed all the help it could get, particularly in the form of oil, manganese, grain and rubber, which was only available from or via the Soviet Union. Stalin and Hitler's divergent destinies would intersect again in August 1939, but under very different auspices than in 1913, as the two would orchestrate an arrangement that would have damning consequences for millions of people across the European continent. The 22-month-long alliance would see Poland divided and occupied, fuel the Nazi conquest of Western Europe, and lead to a new Soviet frontier in Eastern Europe.

The alliance between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union in 1939 - often referred to as the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in reference to the two foreign ministers involved - was a direct consequence of the breakdown of talks between the Soviets, the British and the French. The three powers had spent much of the year tentatively discussing a policy of 'Collective Security' - aimed at resisting German expansionism - to no avail. The talks were arguably already dead in the water by late 1938 as a result of the Munich Agreement, whereby Britain and France resolved to disregard Czechoslovakia's territorial integrity in the face of Nazi aggression. Stalin believed the Western powers had colluded with Hitler's government to allow the violation of Czechoslovak sovereignty and could no longer be trusted.

On 21st August 1939, the negotiations between the Soviet leadership and the Western delegates reached their final day, with no resolution. A matter of intentional impotency on the part of the Western powers, the proposed deal was simply incapable of offering any clear solutions or benefits to the Soviets. The British and French were hoping to merely kill time and delay the summer fighting season until winter, restricting the expected Nazi invasion of Poland by positioning the Soviet Union as the phantom belligerent on the Eastern front and hoping empty rhetoric would counter Nazi aggression. As British historian Roger Moorhouse noted: "The Western policy of procrastination had run out of tomorrows."

Officially, the talks collapsed over Polish officials' refusal to allow Soviet troops into Polish territory in the case of a German attack. If the British and French could not secure Soviet cooperation, then the Nazis would tempt Stalin instead with the offer of dividing Eastern European spoils. For Stalin, the option of keeping the Nazis at arm's length with a temporary alliance, and advancing Soviet territorial ambitions while watching the Western allies pick apart Hitler's empire from the sidelines turned out to be an irresistible calculation, one that would weaken both his enemies on the Continent. Persistent probing from Nazi Germany, in particular from dignitary Schulenburg, was left ignored until negotiations with the West had revealed themselves as utterly irremediable in the summer of 1939. Eventually, in the early morning of 20th August, the day before the talks came to an end, Hitler's government concluded a trade pact with the Soviets in Berlin that allowed for an exchange of Soviet raw materials for finished German goods, and a credit to the Soviets of 200 million Reichsmarks. Economic cooperation would lay

the ground for a non-aggression treaty and secret agreement on European 'spheres of influence'.

Hitler soon dispatched a telegram to Stalin containing an offer for the Reich's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Joachim von Ribbentrop, to personally travel to Moscow and finalise further relations. Stalin's invitation was telegraphed to Hitler on the evening of the 22nd, as the Nazi leader was holidaying at the Berghof in Obersalzberg. The stage was set.

Arriving via the East Prussian city of Königsberg in one of two four-engined Focke-Wulf Condors, the Nazi delegation (which was led by Foreign Minister Ribbentrop and included Hitler's personal photographer, Heinrich Hoffmann) was received at Moscow's Khodynka airfield with much fanfare. A mixture of German and Soviet flags would adorn the two-storey terminal, despite the Soviet authorities having struggled to find a suitable number of Swastika flags for the occasion. Many were simply requisitioned from local film studios, where they had until recently been featured in anti-Nazi propaganda productions. Expecting to only deal with Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov, Ribbentrop was startled to find the Soviet leader himself waiting in the prime minister's office on the first floor of the Kremlin. The negotiations would be carried out through translators, as Molotov didn't speak German and Ribbentrop spoke no Russian. Stalin would accompany Molotov throughout, with Ribbentrop joined by the German ambassador to Moscow, Friedrich-Werner Graf von der Schulenburg.

In the Nazi Foreign Minister's opening statement, he suggested that the Pact be drawn up for a term of 100 years. Stalin's response was to suggest to the rather deflated Ribbentrop that 10 years would be better, as the people would otherwise "laugh at us for not being serious". With draft treaties already drawn up a few days earlier, the two powers would seal a non-aggression treaty in a matter of hours - seven short paragraphs stipulating that neither side would engage in hostile action against the other, or aid a third party in belligerent action directed against the other signatory.

The proceedings swiftly moved on to the more pressing matter of the 'secret protocol' - an additional document, first suggested earlier in the month by the Nazi negotiators, that would specify the boundaries between the two powers 'in the event of a territorial or political rearrangement' in Eastern Europe. Nazi Germany and the Soviet

STALIN'S HAMMER - VYACHESLAV MOLOTOV

Renowned for his talent of enduring long meetings, the Soviet Foreign Minister was affectionately known as 'Comrade Stonearse'

After the traditional revolutionary right of passage in Siberian exile, Molotov had served as editor of *Pravda* from 1917, following the Bolshevik Revolution, before eventually rising to the position of People's Commissar and overseeing the brutal collectivisation campaign in Ukraine of 1932-1933. Like Lenin and Stalin, he would adopt a nom de guerre for his public persona - Molot, deriving from the Russian word for hammer. An unlikely candidate for a diplomatic position, Molotov's chief qualification for the role of Commissar for Foreign Affairs from 1939 was no doubt his unwavering loyalty to Stalin. A bespectacled bureaucrat with a reputation for toeing the party line, Molotov lacked both the language skills and experience of travel for the position, having left the country only once before, and speaking no language other than Russian. He was considered to be a likely successor to Stalin following the leader's death, but Molotov never sought the position. He would remain a defender of Stalin's legacy until his death in 1986.

Vyacheslav Molotov: a staunch supporter of Stalin to the end

"IF THE BRITISH AND FRENCH COULD NOT SECURE SOVIET COOPERATION, THEN THE NAZIS WOULD TEMPT STALIN INSTEAD WITH THE OFFER OF DIVIDING EASTERN EUROPEAN SPOILS"

Union would finally address their shared goals of extending their borders. Poland would suffer under their plans - a country that both powers had signed non-aggression treaties with earlier the same decade. The first serious hurdle would occur when conferring the exact 'spheres of influence' outlined in the secret protocol. When the Nazi delegation opened with the offer that the Soviets could claim eastern Poland and Bessarabia, Finland, Estonia and Latvia up to the river Dvina, Stalin countered by demanding that the entirety of Latvia should fall under Soviet control. The negotiations would be brought to a halt while Ribbentrop contacted Hitler, still at his Berchtesgaden holiday home, to outline the Soviet response. The Führer assented after only brief consideration. Latvia would fall into the hands of the Soviets. Within the space of a single evening and one phone call, Stalin had negotiated a return of the pre-First World War Russian status quo, the position of the Russian empire in Eastern Europe before the territorial losses agreed in the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk.

HITLER'S ENVOY - JOACHIM VON RIBBENTROP

Adolf Hitler's most trusted foreign policy advisor, the Nazi Foreign Minister was largely despised by his peers in the Nazi party

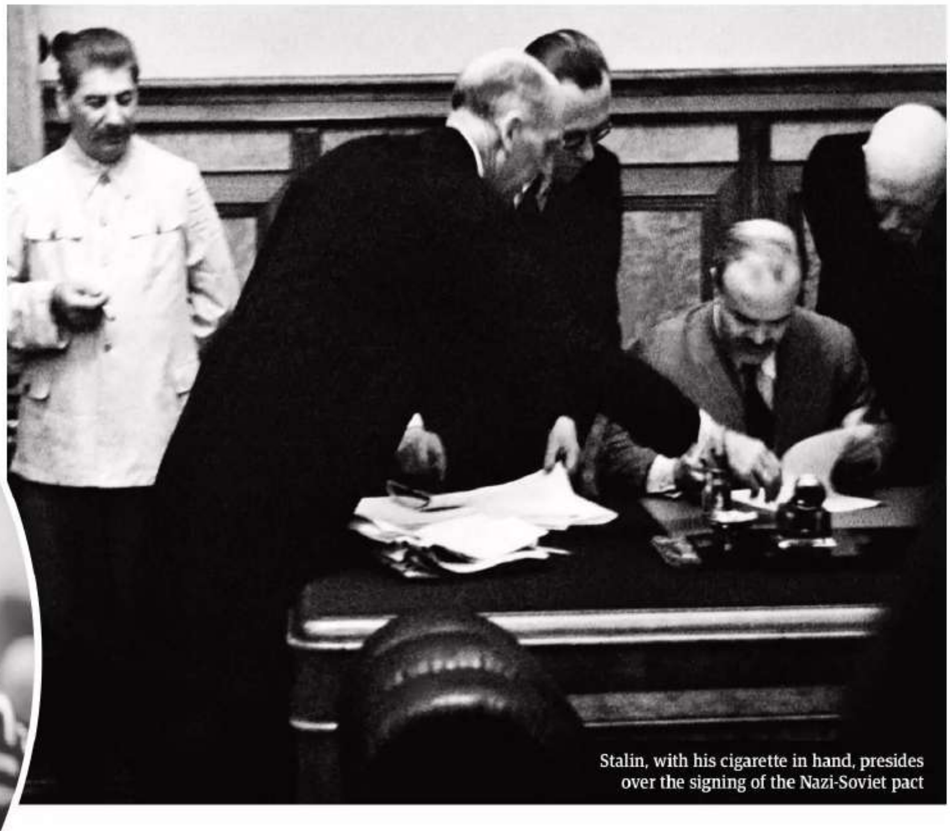
Graduating to the world of politics from a wine-importing business the year before the Nazi seizure of power in 1933, Ribbentrop served as an emissary between the National Socialists and Weimar government, helping facilitate Hitler's rise to the position of German Chancellor. His credentials as a First World War veteran and Iron Cross recipient would no doubt have impressed the future Führer. His peers, however, were quick to remark on his sycophancy and cavalier attitude, with Ribbentrop dismissed as having 'bought his name, married into money and swindled his way into office'. Fluent in both French and English, he was appointed ambassador to Great Britain in 1936 and tasked with negotiating the Anti-Comintern Pact later the same year. Ribbentrop was appointed Nazi Foreign Minister in February 1938, and his inability to conclude an alliance with the British government a few months later made him a bitter Anglophobe. Travelling to Moscow soon after, Ribbentrop was prepared to meet with a world power that he felt recognised the value of economic and military cooperation.

Shortly after negotiations had been concluded, at around midnight, a reception was held with Stalin enthusiastically toasting to the health of the German leader and both Molotov and Ribbentrop following with similar platitudes. The attendees filled their stomachs with caviar, sandwiches and Crimean champagne, and finally gathered for the matter of the exchange of signatures between Molotov and Ribbentrop. Stalin's name is notably absent.

The Pact and its secret addendum would come into force immediately upon being signed, rather than waiting to be ratified by the Politburo. This was a necessity demanded by the urgency of the Nazi leadership to establish Soviet neutrality in regards to the coming invasion of Poland.

Hitler's photographer, Heinrich Hoffmann, was tasked with recording the exchange of signatures in 1939 for posterity. Stalin pointedly insisted on the removal of the champagne glasses, so as not to give the impression that the agreement was made whilst drunk. Despite this, Hoffmann's assistant, Helmut Laux, was still able to capture the fraternal joviality of the occasion when seeing Ribbentrop and Stalin raise a toast. Realising he had been spotted by the Soviet leader, Laux began to remove the film to be handed over and destroyed, only for Stalin to interject saying that there was no need, as he "trusted the word of a German". On returning to Germany, Ribbentrop was fêted by Hitler as "a second Bismarck" while Hoffmann suffered a barrage of questions about Stalin's leadership style, character and physical condition. Hitler's interest even extended as far as the Soviet leader's handshake and the shape of his earlobes - in particular, whether they exhibited the ingrown Jewish trait or were separate and could be considered Aryan. Much to Hitler's displeasure, Stalin could be seen, cigarette in hand, presiding over the signing ceremony in many of Hoffmann's photos. This was something the German leader found unacceptable, explaining that "the signing of a Pact is a solemn act, which one does not approach with a cigarette dangling from one's lips. Such a photograph smacks of levity!" Hoffman doctored the images to remove the cigarette before they were released to the German press.

In response to this newfound official friendship, the Soviet authorities undertook a campaign to withdraw anti-Nazi films from circulation and censor or suppress theatre productions and artistic works critical of the Nazi regime. In Moscow, special performances of Wagner's operas were staged, with the composer Sergei Eisenstein lauded in the Nazi press for his rendition of *The Valkyries* in 1941 as having a "deep and unequalled understanding of the German national epic poem". The German version of the Pact, and secret protocol, was published in 1948 by the US State Department, but the Russian version of the secret protocol only surfaced in 1992. Throughout his life,



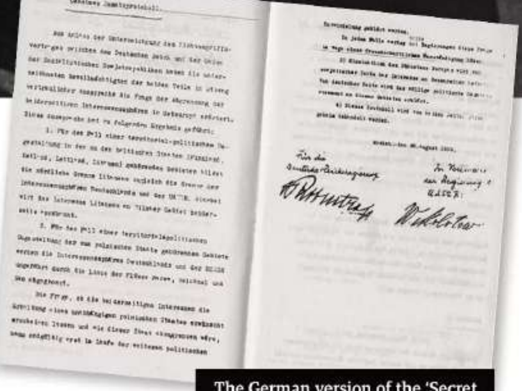
Stalin, with his cigarette in hand, presides over the signing of the Nazi-Soviet pact

Reich Minister for Foreign Affairs, Joachim von Ribbentrop, arrives into Moscow in 1939

Molotov would insist that only he and Stalin were privy to the contents of this additional document, although others in the leadership would have certainly been aware of its existence and the specifics of its implementation.

The signal for the start of Germany's expansionist war against Poland came eight days, almost to the hour, after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in Moscow, when the cruiser Schleswig-Holstein, making a friendly visit to the Free City of Danzig, opened fire at close range on the Polish garrison of the nearby Westerplatte. Two weeks after the Nazi invasion of Poland, following the terms of the Pact, Red Army troops - under the pretext of protecting the 'lives and property of the inhabitants of Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia' - also marched into the country, later incorporating this territory into the Soviet Union. A hastily organised joint victory parade between Nazi and Soviet troops on 22nd September in the city of Brest resulted from a chance meeting between Heinz Guderian's XIX tank corps and a unit from Vasily Chuikov's 4th army. Guderian's book, *Achtung Panzer!*, had revolutionised the idea of motorised combat, espousing what would become known as Blitzkrieg tactics. His Soviet counterpart, Marshal Mikhail Tukhachevsky, had pursued similar ideas, only to fall victim to Stalin's unbridled paranoia in 1937.

Decimated by purges and still lacking in the military material to sustain serious offensive operations, the Soviet advance was chaotic, although aided by the disintegration of the Polish state and confusion of the forces they faced. Some were of the belief that the Red Army was advancing to their aid against fascist aggression. Without too much bloodshed on the Soviet's part, and with neutrality retained, the issue of the Soviet 'sphere of influence' in Poland was settled: for the fourth time in the country's history, it was carved up by its more powerful neighbours. On 28th September, the same day as the city of Warsaw's surrender to Nazi occupation, Molotov and Ribbentrop met again in Moscow and concluded an agreement - the German-Soviet Boundary and Friendship Treaty - fully outlining the zones of occupation in Poland. A secret additional protocol stipulated that no Polish agitation that affects the territories of the other party would be tolerated.



The German version of the 'Secret Protocol' hidden within the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact

Poland never surrendered but hostilities came to an end just over a week later. What followed was the wholesale evisceration of Polish society in the western and eastern areas - the 'pacification' of the population and replacement of national authority with local obedience to occupying powers. Although carried out under different guises by the Nazis and Soviets, these actions would serve the same purpose. What was justified in the west of the country on the grounds of racial purification was portrayed in the east as the necessary rooting out of the class enemy. Arbitrary reprisals against the population by German Wehrmacht units transformed into roaming Einsatzgruppen tasked with decapitating society, while simultaneously evicting and exterminating the country's Jews.

In the 21 months that followed the Soviet invasion of Poland, NKVD agents made more arrests in the occupied eastern territory than in the entire Soviet Union. As NKVD chief Beria initiated a mass-murder operation against Polish prisoners of war, Nazi authorities were concurrently coordinating the AB-Aktion, targeting Polish intellectuals and the upper classes of society. Stalin's conclusion that, following Poland's dismemberment, the alliance with Germany was "cemented in blood" would prove to be disturbingly prescient.

Following the relatively straightforward Soviet advance eastwards in 1939, the Red Army fought a war for control of Finland in the winter of 1939-1940 that would dramatically highlight the weaknesses of the Soviet command. Despite the huge disparity of forces, the Soviets suffered up to a million casualties and the war ended with a truce - the spoils being a military base on the Hanko Peninsula and an additional 15 kilometres between Leningrad and the Finnish border. On 11th February, 1940, a colossal trade pact between Nazi Germany and the Soviets - more than four times larger than the one the two had signed on 20th August, 1939 - was concluded. Designed to aid Hitler's regime in surmounting a British blockade, this strengthening of the alliance 'cemented in blood' would see petroleum, grain, manganese, phosphates and other raw materials transferred to Germany in return for state-of-the-art equipment and war material from the Nazis. Among the Soviet acquisitions were the plans to the battleship Bismarck, Bf 109 and Bf 110 fighters, a Tiger tank and even the cruiser Lützow, which was subsequently renamed Petropavlovsk. Nazi vessels would also be allowed to use the Soviet naval base Basis Nord near Murmansk, which had been purposely constructed using Gulag labour, for covert operations.

Before the renewal of this trade pact a year later, the Red Army consolidated the 'Soviet sphere of influence' in the Baltic states, as half a million Soviet soldiers descended on Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, with "acts of provocation" used as an excuse for military intervention. Soon thereafter relations between the Nazis and Soviets moved into a more challenging phase, as the partnership began to falter. Trade targets were missed and material delayed without explanation. Soviet Foreign Minister Molotov's visit to Berlin in November 1940 to discuss arrangements for a second pact turned out to be fruitless. Fittingly, Ribbentrop's insistence to Molotov in Berlin that the British were 'on the ropes' was interrupted by a timely RAF raid. As negotiations petered out, Hitler issued Directive no. 21 on 18th December, ordering his armed forces to prepare to "crush Soviet Russia in a quick campaign even before the conclusion of the war against England". The Nazi war machine was finally turning on the Soviet Union.

Despite this, the alliance with Nazi Germany would continue until 22nd June, 1941, with the last consignment of Soviet material crossing into German territory just after midnight, bound for Berlin. Within a matter of weeks following the start of Operation Barbarossa, the territories acquired by the Soviets after the 1939 Pact were lost to the Nazi advance. In a manner of Herculean self-hypnosis, Stalin refused to believe the treachery - engaging in what Richard Overy in *Russia's War* refers to as a "personal battle with reality".

The gamble to keep Germany at arm's length had paid off, but the economic and military cooperation between Stalin and Hitler had merely laid the groundwork for the eventual reckoning between the two ideological foes. As economic historian Edward E. Ericson noted: "German soldiers fed by Ukrainian grain, transported by Caucasus oil, and outfitted with boots made from rubber shipped via the Trans-Siberian railroad, fired their Donetz-manganese-hardened steel weapons at their former allies. The Red Army hit back with artillery pieces and planes designed according German specifications and produced by Ruhr Valley machines in factories that burned coal from the Saar."

France, August 1939: News breaks of the new alliance between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union

© Getty Images; Illustration by Julia Lillo

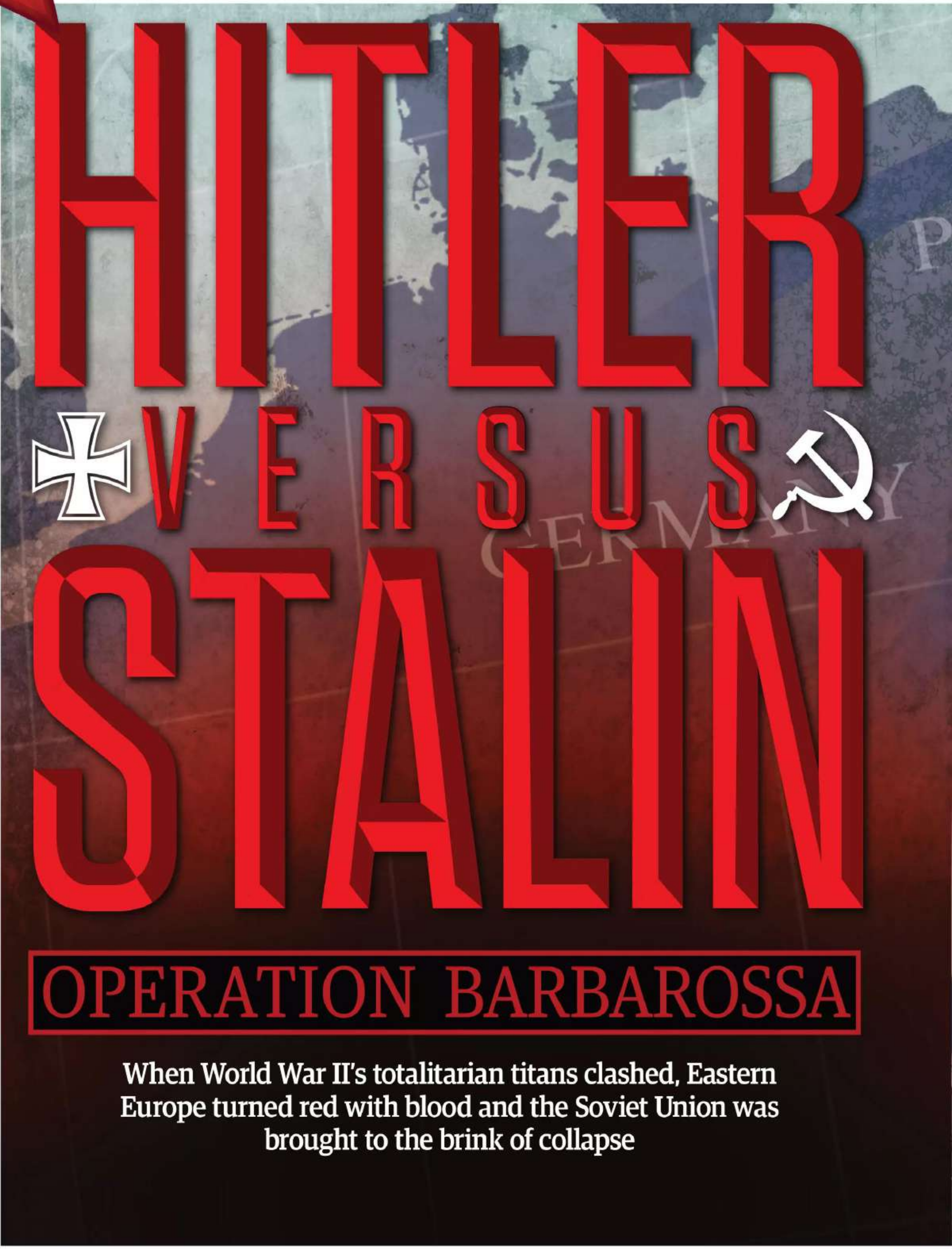
"HITLER ORDERED HIS FORCES TO CRUSH RUSSIA. THE NAZI WAR MACHINE HAD FINALLY TURNED"

THE JEWISH QUESTION - MAXIM LITVINOV'S FATE

The timely downfall of Molotov's predecessor would send an important signal to Nazi Germany

Considered a competent and respected diplomat who had done much to bring the Soviet Union back in from the cold and improve ties with the Western world, Soviet Commissar for Foreign Affairs Maxim Litvinov was an important advocate for the concept of 'Collective Security'. His removal and replacement with Molotov, on 3rd May, 1939, would signal a seismic shift in Soviet foreign policy, and remove a significant obstacle to potential dialogue with Nazi Germany. Litvinov was openly derided in the German press for his Jewish background and public rapprochement would have been near-impossible for the Nazi state when expected to deal with such a visible racial enemy. Litvinov, the Jew, was replaced with Molotov, the Russian, in a move almost certainly scripted by Stalin with the Nazi leadership as the intended audience. Not entirely surprised by his removal, Litvinov would later say, "Do you really think that I was the right person to sign a treaty with Hitler?"

© Getty Images; WIKI



HITLER VERSUS STALIN

OPERATION BARBAROSSA

When World War II's totalitarian titans clashed, Eastern Europe turned red with blood and the Soviet Union was brought to the brink of collapse

War of total annihilation was about to begin. The target of the Nazi wrath was the Soviet Union, the communist powerhouse that dominated from the Baltic Sea to the North Pacific. Since penning Mein Kampf in 1925, German dictator Adolf Hitler had made it his mission to supply the German people with the Lebensraum - living space - he believed they needed and end what he saw as the creeping evil of Bolshevism, the revolutionary creed that, as he saw it, threatened the fragile German republic of the 1920s. This wasn't just any military campaign - it was a clash between two mutually exclusive ideologies that viewed each other with absolute contempt, two totalitarian dictatorships that ruled through fear and demanded absolute, unthinking obedience, and two all-powerful monsters that commanded their war effort from the highest level. In the spring of 1941, Austrian failed artist Adolf Hitler would break his pact with Georgian bank robber Joseph Stalin - and millions would pay for their arrogance.

Deutschlands Sieg
EUROPAS FREIHEIT

Walther von Brauchitsch and Adolf Hitler oversee the victory parade of the Wehrmacht in Poland 1939

FROM THE BALTIC TO THE BLACK SEA

Contrary to popular myth, there was no single 'blitzkrieg' doctrine in the German Army - their successes of 1939 and 1940 were built on a mobile warfare doctrine developed after World War I, coupled with a strong professional officer corps and air superiority.

By December 1940, though, Hitler had been seduced by his own propaganda. Convinced the USSR would crumble in the face of a knock-out blow, Führer Directive 21 outlined the plan of what was to become Operation Barbarossa - named for the Holy Roman Emperor who led the Third Crusade. 134 full-strength divisions were committed to the new front under Field Marshal Walther von Brauschitsch, spread over the continent from Memel in the north to Odessa in the south.

The 1939 German-Soviet non-aggression pact that had carved up Eastern Europe for the two despots was torn up, and Hitler confidently predicted the invasion would take a mere ten weeks. The tactical pre-emptive strike would be fought by the Ostheer on three fronts by Army Groups North, South and Centre, and aimed to expel all Soviet forces behind the Arkhangelsk-Astrakhan (A-A) Line and take Leningrad, Moscow and Kiev. Army Group Centre, led by WWI veteran Field Marshal Fedor von Bock, would take the same route as Napoleon's ill-fated invasion of Russia 129 years prior.

To ensure the Germans didn't suffer the same fate, General Friedrich Paulus was entrusted with undertaking a strategic survey of the attack zone.

Paulus advised encirclement tactics to prevent the Red Army retreating and overstretching German supply lines, locking them into a costly guerrilla war in the Soviet interior. Barbarossa was delayed by over a month as German forces experienced stiffer opposition than expected in the Balkans. The Yugoslavs in particular put up fierce resistance and Hitler was forced to take over the failing Italian invasion of Greece, where locals fought back. The delay could have given the Kremlin time to rally defences but, despite warnings, Stalin was sure Hitler would not invade until Britain was under German occupation.

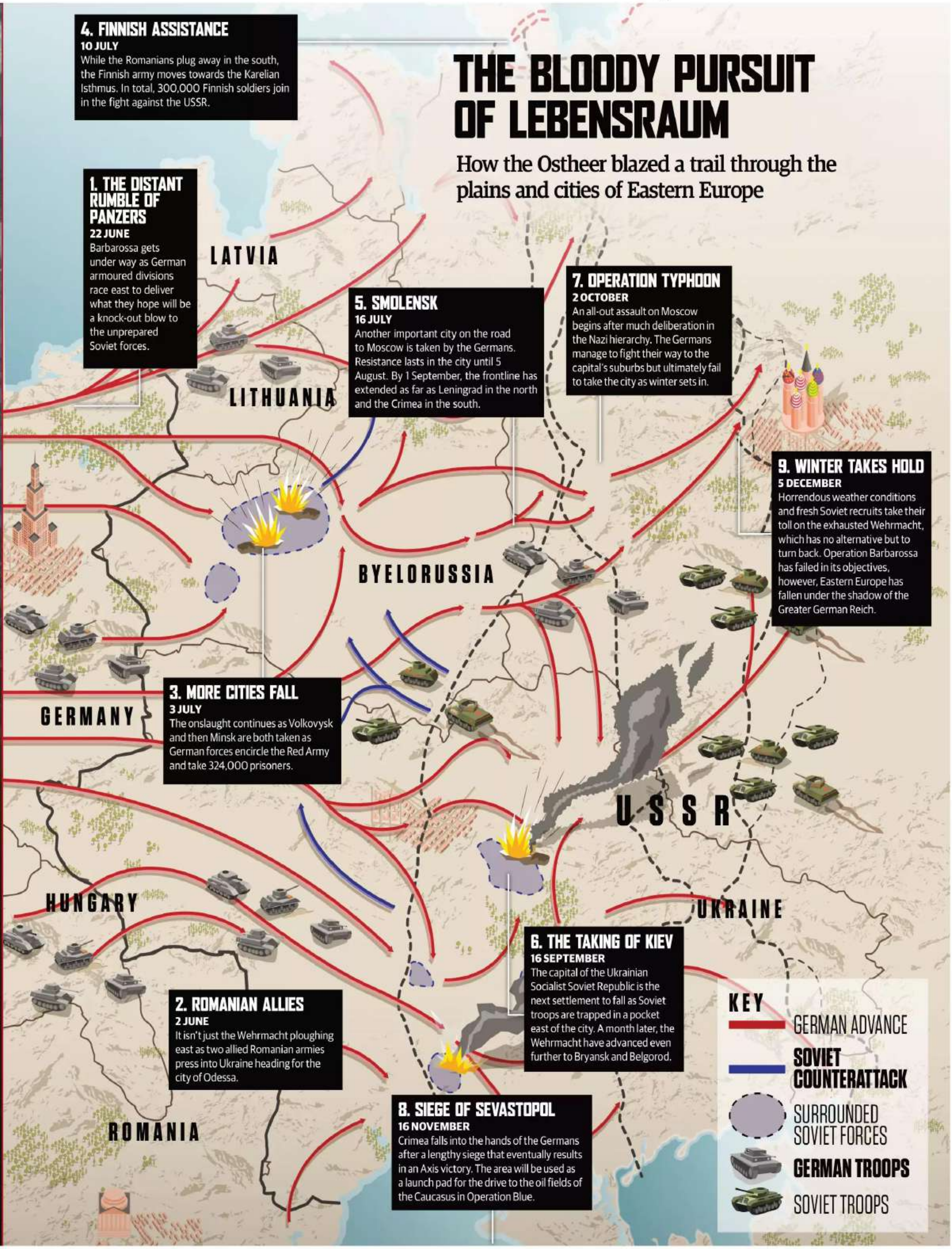
The Soviet leader was tipped off as early as December 1940, and was reminded of the threat in a message sent by Winston Churchill in April 1941. Stalin was given one final chance to mobilise his troops on 21 June 1941, the eve of Barbarossa. Wehrmacht Sergeant-Major Alfred Lishof, who had deserted his unit and been taken in by Soviet soldiers, claimed a German attack was imminent.

Stalin rebuffed his warnings. He received a rude awakening the next day: the war for the east had begun.

> **"WE ONLY HAVE TO KICK IN THE DOOR AND THE WHOLE ROTTEN STRUCTURE WILL COME CRASHING DOWN"**
>
> **HITLER'S PREDICTION FOR JUNE 1941**

THE BLOODY PURSUIT OF LEBENSRAUM

How the Ostheer blazed a trail through the plains and cities of Eastern Europe



1. THE DISTANT RUMBLE OF PANZERS

22 JUNE

Barbarossa gets under way as German armoured divisions race east to deliver what they hope will be a knock-out blow to the unprepared Soviet forces.

2. ROMANIAN ALLIES

2 JUNE

It isn't just the Wehrmacht ploughing east as two allied Romanian armies press into Ukraine heading for the city of Odessa.

3. MORE CITIES FALL

3 JULY

The onslaught continues as Volkovysk and then Minsk are both taken as German forces encircle the Red Army and take 324,000 prisoners.

4. FINNISH ASSISTANCE

10 JULY

While the Romanians plug away in the south, the Finnish army moves towards the Karelian Isthmus. In total, 300,000 Finnish soldiers join in the fight against the USSR.

5. SMOLENSK

16 JULY

Another important city on the road to Moscow is taken by the Germans. Resistance lasts in the city until 5 August. By 1 September, the frontline has extended as far as Leningrad in the north and the Crimea in the south.

6. THE TAKING OF KIEV

16 SEPTEMBER

The capital of the Ukrainian Socialist Soviet Republic is the next settlement to fall as Soviet troops are trapped in a pocket east of the city. A month later, the Wehrmacht have advanced even further to Bryansk and Belgorod.

7. OPERATION TYPHOON

2 OCTOBER

An all-out assault on Moscow begins after much deliberation in the Nazi hierarchy. The Germans manage to fight their way to the capital's suburbs but ultimately fail to take the city as winter sets in.

8. SIEGE OF SEVASTOPOL

16 NOVEMBER

Crimea falls into the hands of the Germans after a lengthy siege that eventually results in an Axis victory. The area will be used as a launch pad for the drive to the oil fields of the Caucasus in Operation Blue.

9. WINTER TAKES HOLD

5 DECEMBER

Horrendous weather conditions and fresh Soviet recruits take their toll on the exhausted Wehrmacht, which has no alternative but to turn back. Operation Barbarossa has failed in its objectives, however, Eastern Europe has fallen under the shadow of the Greater German Reich.

HITLER'S ARMOURED STORM

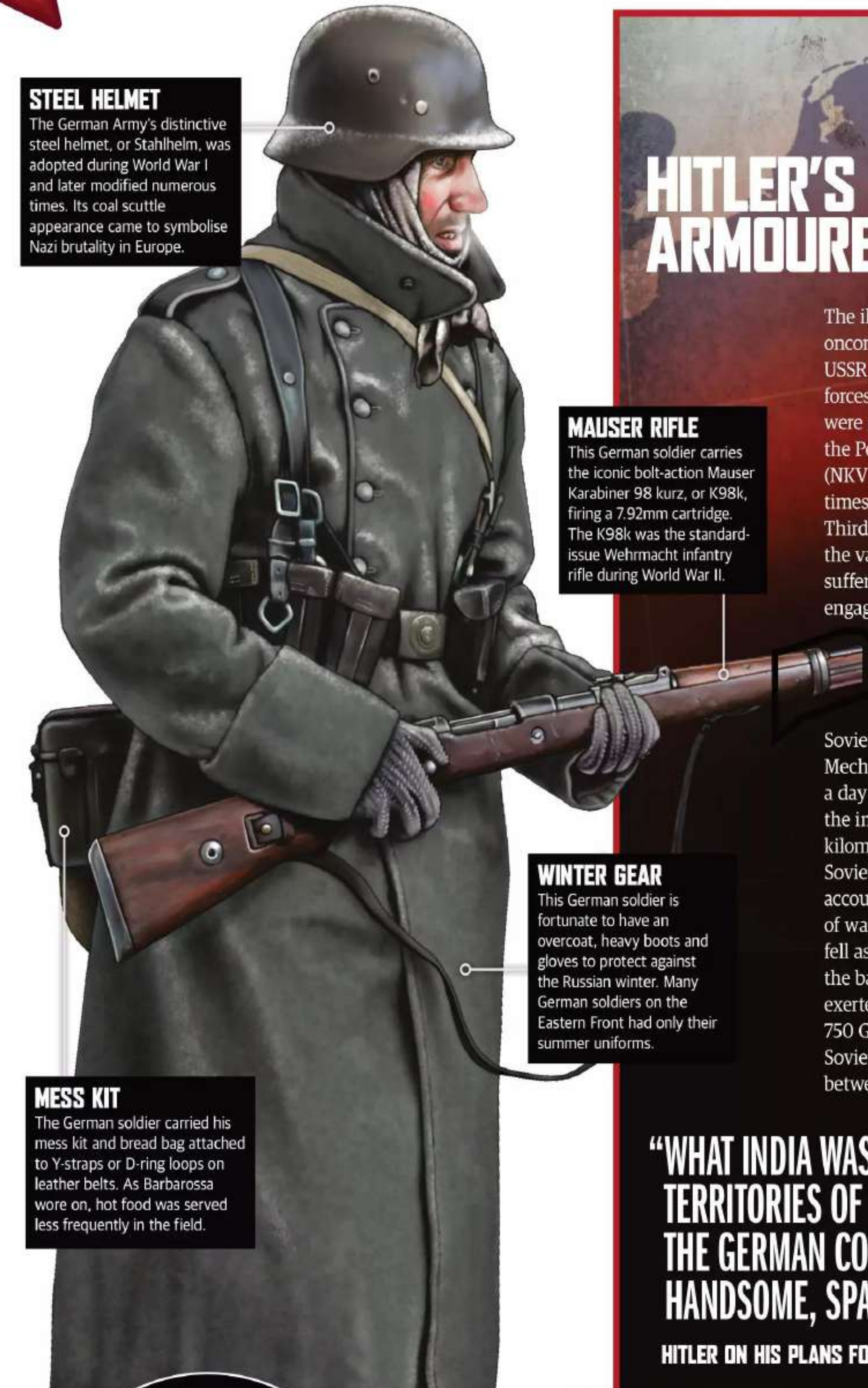
The ill-prepared Red Army and the fury of the oncoming assault was a lethal cocktail for the USSR. Stalin's purges of generals had put his forces at a severe disadvantage and the troops were growing weary of constant supervision by the People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs (NKVD). The Soviets may have had up to three times the number of tanks and aircraft as the Third Reich but they were widely dispersed across the vast country, lacked strong command and suffered from obsolete technology. The first major engagement of the Baltic front was the Battle of Raseiniai beginning on 23 June. The attack included a huge bombardment from both ground artillery and the Luftwaffe, which crippled Soviet airfields, seeing the Soviet Air Forces lose 25 per cent of its strength. Mechanised divisions covered up to 80 kilometres a day as the front went further eastwards, while the infantry was behind them, yomping 30 kilometres a day. Encircling the shell-shocked Soviets was paying off as pincer movements accounted for hundreds of thousands of prisoners of war. In early July, Białystok and Minsk also fell as the Red Army retreated from Belarus to the banks of the Dnieper River. The Wehrmacht exerted technical and tactical dominance, with 750 German armoured vehicles crushing 3,500 Soviet armoured vehicles at the Battle of Brody between 23-30 June.

> **"WHAT INDIA WAS FOR ENGLAND THE TERRITORIES OF RUSSIA WILL BE FOR US... THE GERMAN COLONISTS OUGHT TO LIVE ON HANDSOME, SPACIOUS FARMS"**
>
> **HITLER ON HIS PLANS FOR THE LEBENSRAUM**

German troops enter Russia during the early stages of the invasion, June 1941

WEHRMACHT SOLDIER

The battle-hardened soldiers of the German Wehrmacht knew only victory until they invaded Soviet Russia

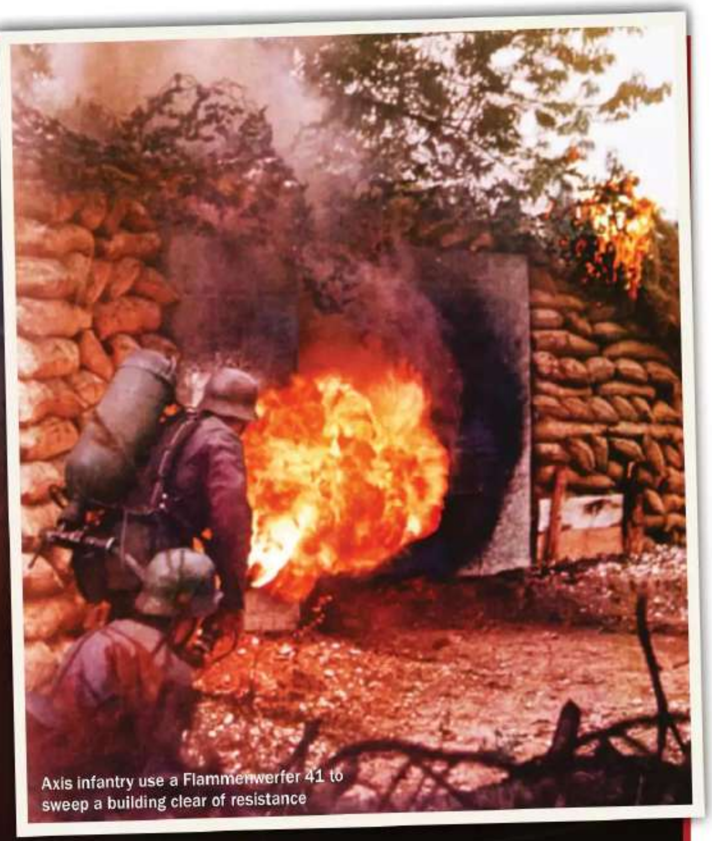


STEEL HELMET
The German Army's distinctive steel helmet, or Stahlhelm, was adopted during World War I and later modified numerous times. Its coal scuttle appearance came to symbolise Nazi brutality in Europe.

MAUSER RIFLE
This German soldier carries the iconic bolt-action Mauser Karabiner 98 kurz, or K98k, firing a 7.92mm cartridge. The K98k was the standard-issue Wehrmacht infantry rifle during World War II.

WINTER GEAR
This German soldier is fortunate to have an overcoat, heavy boots and gloves to protect against the Russian winter. Many German soldiers on the Eastern Front had only their summer uniforms.

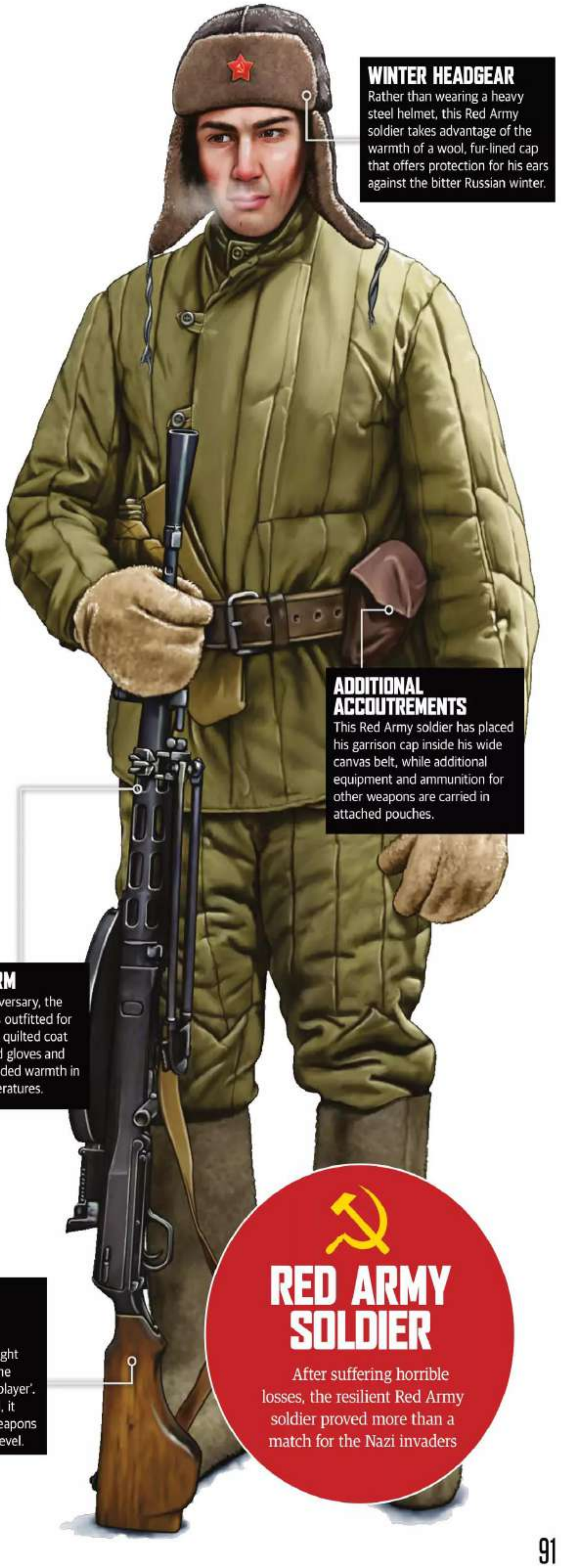
MESS KIT
The German soldier carried his mess kit and bread bag attached to Y-straps or D-ring loops on leather belts. As Barbarossa wore on, hot food was served less frequently in the field.



Axis infantry use a Flammenwerfer 41 to sweep a building clear of resistance

> **“BURNING VILLAGES, STARING BODIES OF FALLEN RUSSIAN SOLDIERS, SWOLLEN CARCASSES OF DEAD HORSES, RUSTING, BLACKENED AND BURNT-OUT TANKS WERE THE SIGNS OF THE MARCH”**
>
> **A GERMAN INFANTRYMAN DESCRIBES THE EARLY DAYS OF BARBAROSSA**

July saw torrential rain drench the battlefields of eastern Europe. It was so severe that the free-roaming Ostheer had been stopped in its tracks and columns of troops tailed back tens of kilometres waiting for the Sun to emerge from the clouds. This gave the beleaguered Red Army a chance to rediscover its composure. The reaction was a counterattack but the Wehrmacht stood firm, beating the Soviets back and advancing ever further towards Smolensk, which fell after a month of heavy fighting. The Germans were suffering substantial losses now but the Wehrmacht juggernaut just kept on coming. Stalin ordered a strict scorched-earth policy. All across the Eastern Front bridges were destroyed, railway lines were sabotaged and roads were demolished. Strong resistance was now a must as the Ostheer drew ever nearer to the cradle of Soviet power. Stalin didn't tolerate failure and General Dmitry Pavlov was duly executed for his failure to prevent the German advance. Now his commanders were much more hesitant to surrender or retreat. While Stalin was purging the Red Army from the top down, the Wehrmacht was busy pillaging the population of Minsk.



WINTER HEADGEAR
Rather than wearing a heavy steel helmet, this Red Army soldier takes advantage of the warmth of a wool, fur-lined cap that offers protection for his ears against the bitter Russian winter.

ADDITIONAL ACCOUTREMENTS
This Red Army soldier has placed his garrison cap inside his wide canvas belt, while additional equipment and ammunition for other weapons are carried in attached pouches.

WINTER UNIFORM
Unlike his German adversary, the Red Army soldier was outfitted for winter warfare with a quilted coat and trousers, fur-lined gloves and thick boots that provided warmth in below-freezing temperatures.

DP-28 LIGHT MACHINE GUN
With its large drum magazine, the DP-28 light machine gun earned the nickname 'the record player'. Firing a 7.62mm round, it provided automatic weapons support at the squad level.

RED ARMY SOLDIER

After suffering horrible losses, the resilient Red Army soldier proved more than a match for the Nazi invaders

THE HOLOCAUST IN THE EAST

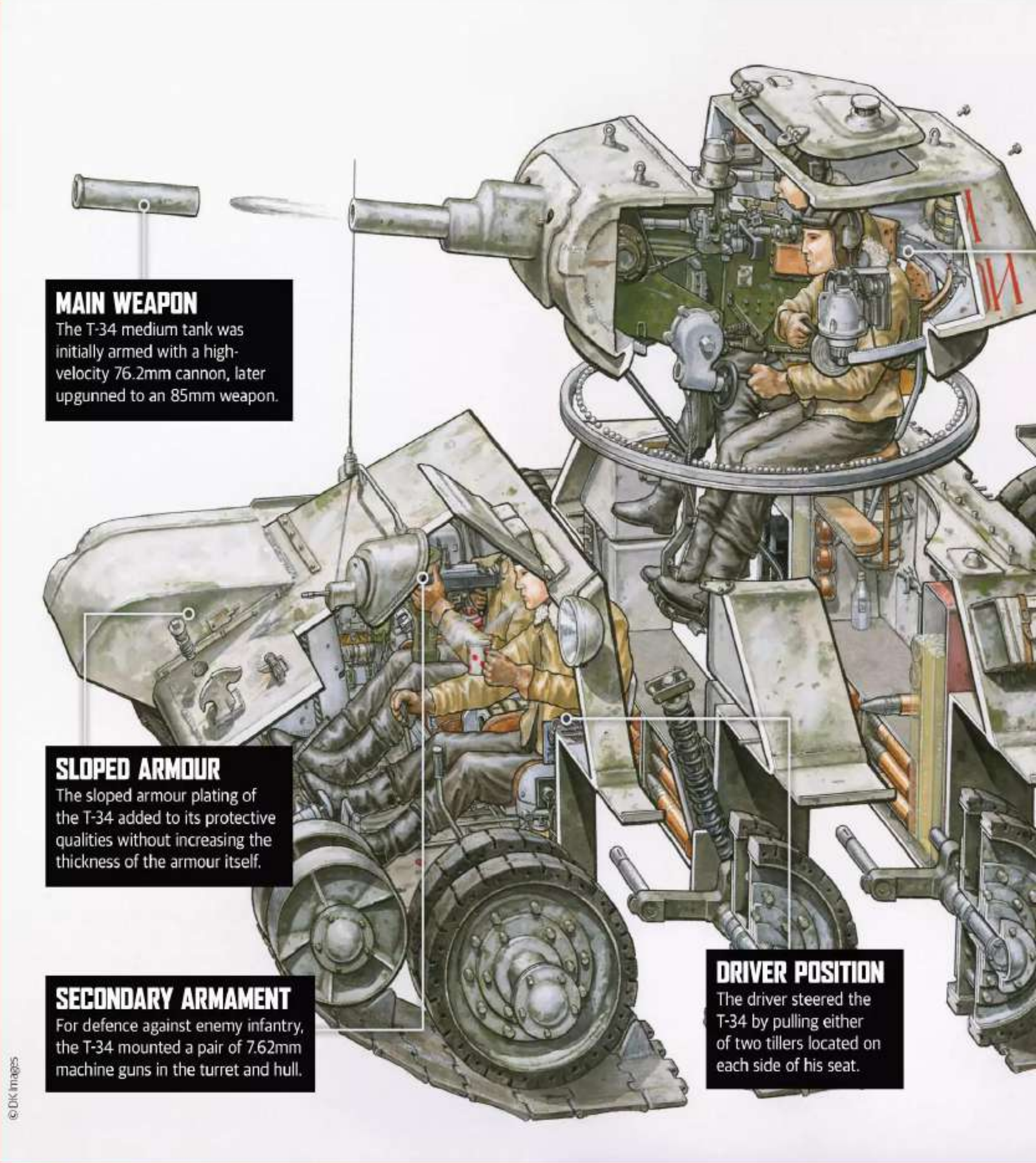
As the front kept expanding, Hitler's vision for an ethnically 'pure' Lebensraum was beginning to be realised behind the lines. Following in the infantry's tracks was the Einsatzgruppen - paramilitary death squads under the command of the SS. They systematically murdered Jews, communist officials and intelligentsia, and Romani and Sinti Gypsies in mass shootings, public hangings and gas trucks, which used the exhaust emissions from motors to choke their victims.

Concentration camps and ghettos were also established, and their inmates used as slave labour. Some of the Wehrmacht command had misgivings but this didn't stop it, and many regular army units, police units, locally raised auxiliaries and fascist militia were complicit in the bloodletting. One of the largest of the mass murders was at Babi Yar on the outskirts of Kiev in September 1941. SS records report a total of 600,000 killed in 1941 alone and the terror outlasted Barbarossa with up to 2 million people being killed by the Einsatzgruppen between 1941 and 1944.

After the close of hostilities, 24 former Einsatzgruppen commanders were charged with crimes against humanity at the Einsatzgruppen Trial, from 1947-48. 14 received death sentences and two received life sentences. The others were given lesser sentences. The ultimate architects of the system, Reichsführer-SS Heinrich Himmler and SS-Obergruppenführer Reinhard Heydrich, both met justice - the former committed suicide in his prison cell while the latter was assassinated in Prague by Allied agents.

"IS IT POSSIBLE THE INVADERS NO LONGER REGARD US AS HUMAN AND BRAND US LIKE CATTLE? ONE CAN NOT ACCEPT SUCH MEANNESS. BUT WHO DARES OPPOSE THEM?"

VILNA RESIDENT MACHA ROLNIKAS WRITING IN HER DIARY IN JUNE 1941



MAIN WEAPON
The T-34 medium tank was initially armed with a high-velocity 76.2mm cannon, later upgunned to an 85mm weapon.

SLOPED ARMOUR
The sloped armour plating of the T-34 added to its protective qualities without increasing the thickness of the armour itself.

SECONDARY ARMAMENT
For defence against enemy infantry, the T-34 mounted a pair of 7.62mm machine guns in the turret and hull.

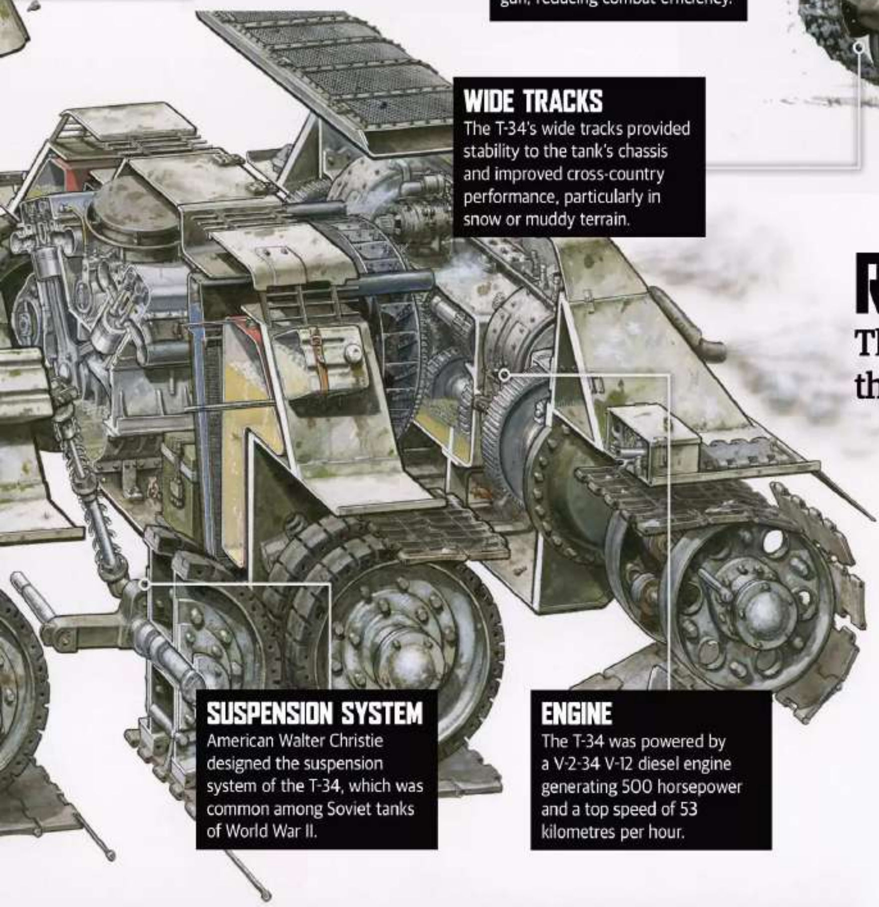
DRIVER POSITION
The driver steered the T-34 by pulling either of two tillers located on each side of his seat.

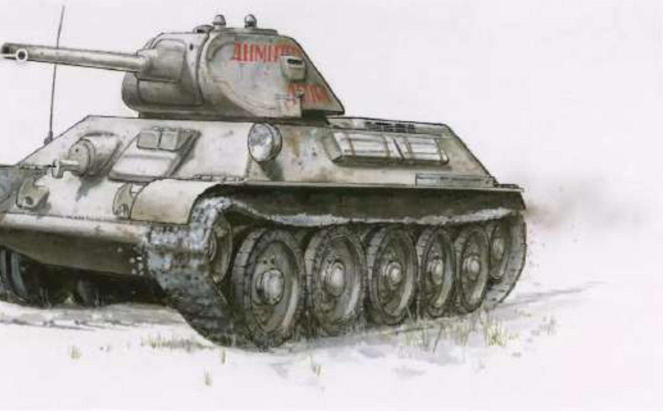
© DK Images

THE ADVANCE FALTERS

The first phase of Barbarossa was over and Hitler and his generals now had to make a judgement call. There were three possible routes that lay ahead: drive on to Moscow, venture north to conquer the birthplace of communism, Leningrad, or turn south and head for the USSR's breadbasket, Ukraine. Hitler, overruling his generals in the process, opted for the latter, reasoning that the oil fields of Baku and the Soviet industry hub at Kharkov were a priority. This would weaken the attacking thrust on Moscow, but the Führer, still completely convinced of his talent as a war leader, believed he knew best. The disagreements rumbled on for the majority of August, as valuable time to completely crush the Soviets was lost. This respite was just what the Red Army needed. By the middle of August, 200 fresh divisions had been brought west, and even if the Germans continued to outthink the Soviets, they would not outnumber them.

Despite the oncoming numerical advantage, the ensuing Battle of Kiev was the biggest defeat ever felt by the Red Army in history, and as the Germans took the Uman Pocket, things weren't getting better up north either. The symbolic city of Leningrad had been besieged from mid-September and 300 civilians were dying every day in the former Russian capital, where starvation had seen the population resort to eating cats, dogs and birds. There were even reports of cannibalism.





CRAMPED INTERIOR
The interior of the T-34 was not ergonomically ideal as its crew operated in cramped positions for extended periods.

TURRET
The compact two-man turret of the early T-34 required the commander to aim the main gun, reducing combat efficiency.

WIDE TRACKS
The T-34's wide tracks provided stability to the tank's chassis and improved cross-country performance, particularly in snow or muddy terrain.

SUSPENSION SYSTEM
American Walter Christie designed the suspension system of the T-34, which was common among Soviet tanks of World War II.

ENGINE
The T-34 was powered by a V-2-34 V-12 diesel engine generating 500 horsepower and a top speed of 53 kilometres per hour.

RED ARMY WORKHORSE

The Soviet T-34 is thought to be the most formidable tank of World War II

A German tank with a vehicle recognition drape during the Battle of Moscow

OPERATION TYPHOON

After the successes in both the north and south, it was time for the Ostheer to deliver the killing blow: Moscow. The assault got under way in October as Vyazma, a town 200 kilometres south of Moscow, was taken. The victories just kept coming as Kalinin and Bryansk also fell. Moscow was nearing.

In the city, the scene was one of panic. Two million people had fled the capital and the Soviet government had been relocated to Kuybyshev (now Samara) 800 kilometres to the east. One man who didn't quake in his boots was Georgy Zhukov. With Imperial Japan no longer posing a threat to the Soviet Far East - thanks in part to his critical victory at Khalkhin Gol in 1939 - he mobilised 900,000 recruits from the eastern military districts to combat the Germans in the west. The Ostheer were just 65 kilometres from the gates of Moscow and could see the light of anti-aircraft fire over the city, but they were unable to advance any further. The Soviet strategy was now to attack the energy-sapped and sleep-deprived Germans as much as possible, using the fresh troops, with adverse weather giving the Red Army plenty of time to regroup and consolidate its positions. Now a long way from Berlin, German intelligence began to falter. High Command severely underestimated the amount of troops the USSR could call on and their prediction of 50 reserve Red Army divisions was woefully inadequate. By mid-November, the Rasputitsa autumn rains had ceased and the muddy quagmire had hardened, finally allowing large-scale offensives to recommence.

The Germans were now in Moscow's suburbs and could see the Kremlin. The heat of battle was fierce as the Red Army fought tooth and nail for the salvation of their capital. Something had to give, and it did, as the coldest winter for 140 years gripped the Soviet Union.

> **"FOR ALL MILITARY PURPOSES, SOVIET RUSSIA IS DONE WITH. THE BRITISH DREAM OF A TWO-FRONT WAR IS DEAD"**
>
> **COMMANDER OF THE FIRST SS PANZER DIVISION, SEPP DIETTRICH, 9 OCTOBER 1941**

A Wehrmacht soldier keeps an eye out for unexpected Russian attacks

GENERAL FROST

The Soviets were prepared for the sub-zero temperatures, equipped with padded winter clothing and specialist units - including ski troops and sleds for transporting guns and artillery. The Germans, meanwhile, had nothing of the sort. Hitler's confidence of a swift victory meant that few of the soldiers had winter clothing to keep the frost at bay and the results were devastating. Guns jammed and gloved fingers struggled to work them loose, rations froze with stews turning to hunks of ice, engines seized up for want of antifreeze, and intense blizzards grounded the Luftwaffe. The frostbite was so bad that 14,000 soldiers had their limbs amputated and the Ostheer's supply train, which was overly dependent on horses, was crippled. The Red Army counterattack on 5 December hit hard as 88 Soviet divisions ploughed into German lines over an 800-kilometre front. This crushed the resolve of the already weary Germans but Hitler was not one to admit defeat and ordered von Bock to hold his ground. The decision was pigheaded at best and represented the Führer's overconfidence as a general. The Red Army advance initiated a series of losses for the Wehrmacht, enraging Hitler. Von Rundstedt, von Brauchitsch and von Bock were all relieved of their duties as Hitler shuffled his pack. Günther von Kluge was promoted to field marshal while Hitler himself took over as supreme commander. The changes didn't have the desired effect and a tactical retreat was ordered as the panzer divisions withdrew 322 kilometres west to the starting place of Operation Typhoon. Barbarossa had failed.

> **"THE WIND STABS YOU IN THE FACE WITH NEEDLES AND BLASTS THROUGH YOUR PROTECTIVE HEADGEAR AND YOUR GLOVES. YOUR EYES ARE STREAMING SO MUCH YOU CAN HARDLY SEE A THING"**
>
> **WEHRMACHT GENERAL GOTTHARD HEINRICI ON THE HARSH CONDITIONS**

THE LAKE LADOGA LIFELINE

Hitler coveted Leningrad as it was the symbolic centre of communism - the heart of the October Revolution of 1917 - and its successful invasion would be an ideological victory. Rail and land connections to the rest of the USSR were severed on 30 August as Nazi command decided to besiege the city. The only chance for Leningrad lay in Lake Lagoda, which was already providing a natural barrier, dividing German and Finnish co-belligerents. The lake froze over in November 1941 allowing lorries to transport supplies into the city, providing relief. The incoming resources from the ice road weren't enough to completely sustain the city but the natural highway helped keep the city alive until it was liberated in January 1944 after more than 900 days of siege.

Below: For its citizens' immense bravery and stamina, Leningrad was named a hero city by the Soviet government in 1945

BARBAROSSA GENERALS

The opposing German and Soviet commanders committed millions of men and vast resources to one of the largest clashes of arms the world had ever seen

ADOLF HITLER

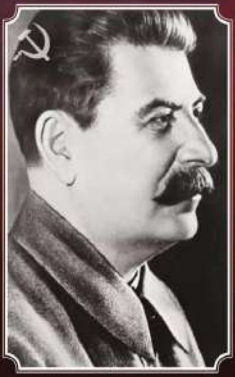
As early as the 1920s, Hitler made public his vision for the German people to find Lebensraum, or living space, in the east. Believing that Russia could not withstand the Nazi onslaught, the Führer launched Operation Barbarossa. It was a decision that would doom the Third Reich.

WALTHER VON BRAUCHITSCH

Commander in chief of the German Army during the early years of WWII, Field Marshal von Brauchitsch supported Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union. However, von Brauchitsch fell into disfavour when German forces failed to capture Moscow.

FEDOR VON BOCK

Field Marshal Fedor von Bock commanded Army Group Centre during Barbarossa. He opposed Hitler's changes to the original plan to drive directly against Moscow rather than encircling Red Army troops and capturing Minsk and other cities prior to the advance on the capital.



JOSEPH STALIN

After the nations signed a non-aggression pact in 1939 and co-operated during the invasion of Poland, Premier Joseph Stalin naively refused to believe intelligence reports suggesting that Hitler and the Nazi war machine were preparing to invade the Soviet Union on a front more than 1,600 kilometres long.

GEORGY ZHUKOV

Although his earliest counteroffensive operations against the invading German Army ended in failure, Marshal Georgy Zhukov remained a central figure in the Red Army effort to stem the Nazi tide and in the eventual victory during the Great Patriotic War, as the Soviets called World War II.

ALEKSANDR VASILEVSKY

A high-ranking member of the Red Army general staff, Marshal Vasilevsky was responsible for planning much of the defensive effort around Moscow in the autumn of 1941 as well as many aspects of the Soviet counteroffensive that ultimately led to victory.

GERMANY'S ALLIES

The smaller nations thrown into the meat grinder between Hitler and Stalin

FINLAND

Finland had been embroiled in border disputes with the Soviet Union prior to Barbarossa. The two nations had been battling it out on the Karelian Isthmus since 1939 and Hitler saw the chance for an alliance. On the same day as Barbarossa, the Finnish Army, although not technically part of the Axis, began an assault on the Isthmus north of Leningrad. Even after Barbarossa ended, the Continuation War lasted until 1944.

ROMANIA

Hitler was keen for an alliance with Romania as it granted him access to extra oil reserves and the second largest contribution of troops to Barbarossa. The troops joined up with Army Group South but found their ability in battle was often castigated by Wehrmacht generals. Regardless, they were instrumental in the push on Odessa and the Crimea, but when the USSR pushed west, the Romanian Army was in no position to resist.

ITALY

After the joint invasion of Greece and the Balkans, Mussolini was keen to assist his German ally. An expeditionary force of 62,000 troops was raised but, like the Germans, they were unprepared for the frozen climate. The Italian Eighth Army supported the Wehrmacht throughout the campaign but turned out to be no match for the Red Army. Tens of thousands of POWs were captured to suffer in Soviet prison camps.

HUNGARY

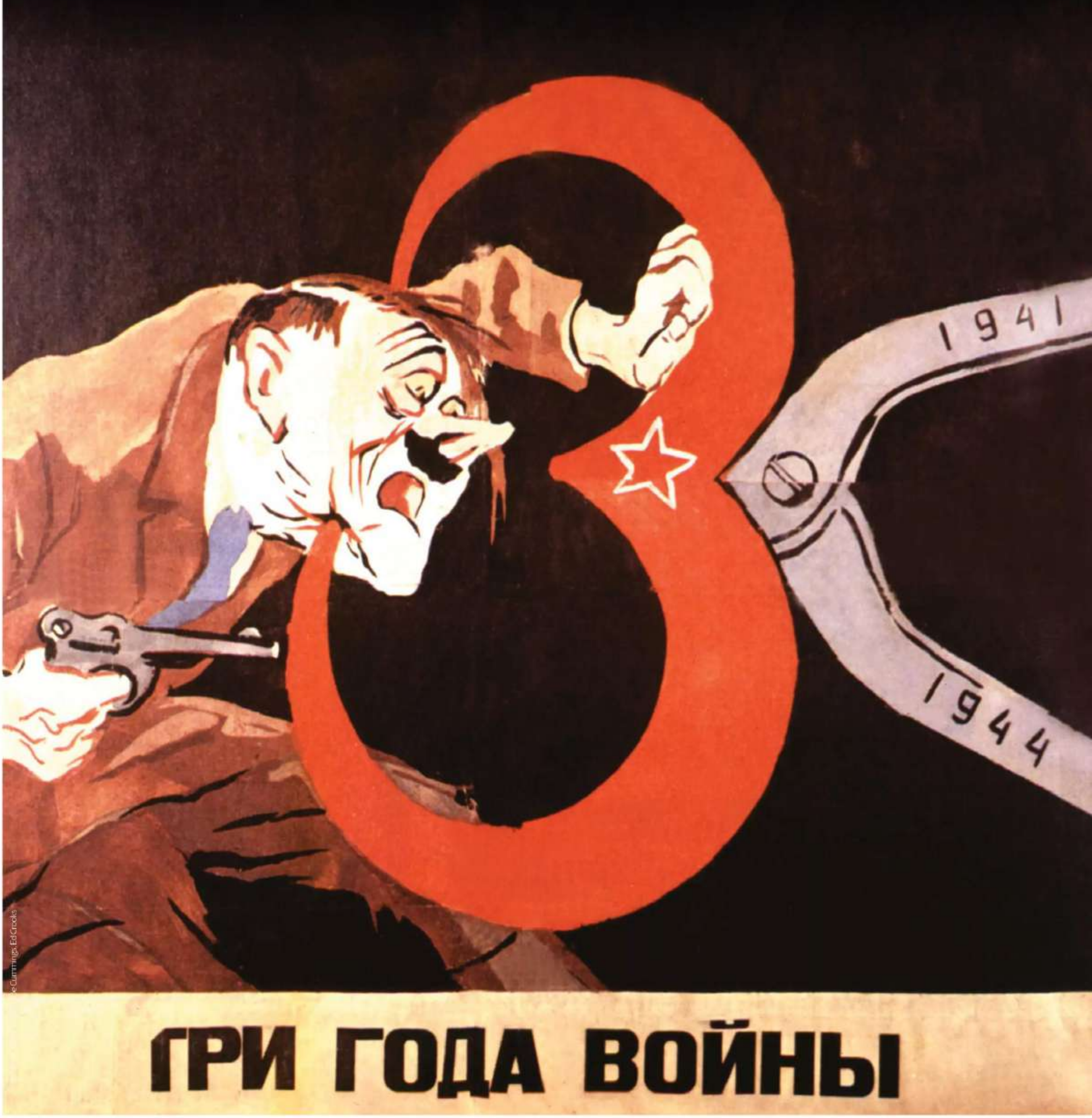
Linked to Germany through their alliance with the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, Hungary was given territory in Romania and Yugoslavia as a way of goading them into the war. Despite this, the Hungarians were hesitant to commit soldiers and contributed less than other Axis states. Their sudden capitulation in 1944 in the face of the Red Army advance saw Hitler install a puppet regime to try to stymie the Soviet fight back.

SLOVAK REPUBLIC

The Slovak Republic was established in 1939 as a client state to Nazi Germany. As a puppet state, it was forced to submit to German direction. The Slovakian Expeditionary Army Group sent 45,000 men to aid the Wehrmacht but could not keep up as it lacked vehicles to match the fast-moving panzer formations. Their morale declined as the war went on so the majority of its divisions were turned into purely construction battalions.

“THEY ARE EVERYWHERE PUSHING THROUGH THE WIDE GAPS THAT HAVE OPENED UP IN OUR FRONT. THE RETREAT IN SNOW AND ICE IS ABSOLUTELY NAPOLEONIC IN ITS MANNER. THE LOSSES ARE THE SAME”

GENERAL GOTTHARD HEINRICI, WHO SERVED IN THE FOURTH ARMY UNDER VON KLUGE, 22 DECEMBER 1941



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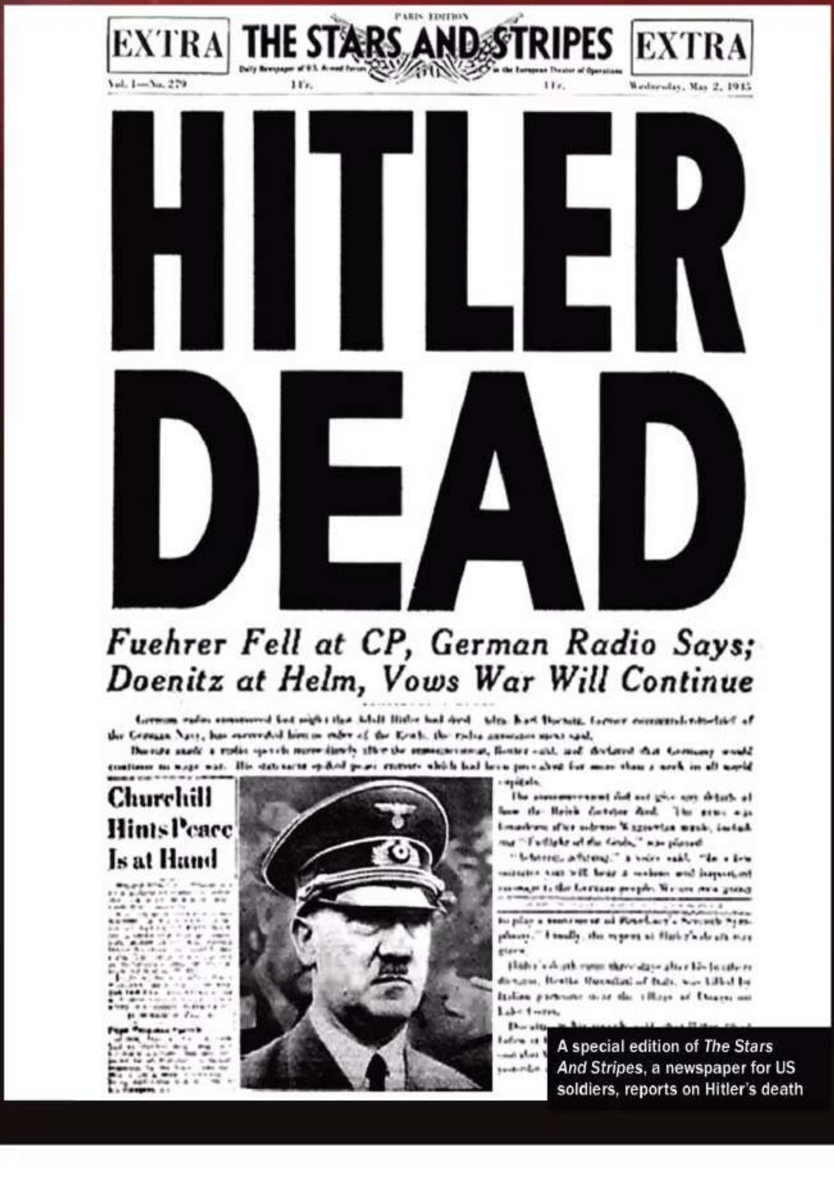
WHY HITLER LOST

Despite the Nazi war machine's initial victories as the armoured spearheads of Operation Barbarossa struck deep across the vast expanse of Russia, killing or capturing millions of Red Army soldiers, Adolf Hitler had failed to reckon with several salient points which condemned the Wehrmacht only to defence, decline and ultimately defeat on the Eastern Front.

Expecting a rapid advance to victory, Hitler underestimated the resolve of his communist enemy and the steely, ruthless determination of Joseph Stalin once the Soviet Union was plunged into war. As the Germans marched from victory to victory, overconfidence gripped the Führer and his senior commanders. However, by the autumn of 1941, the situation had begun to take on a different character. While Hitler meddled with the conduct of the offensive both strategically and tactically, Red Army counterattacks and then seemingly endless rain, mud and snow combined to slow the Nazi tide. For the German soldier, an ill wind blew across Russia with the winter of 1941. Often with nothing more substantial than their summer uniforms to protect against the bitter cold, men were incapacitated or simply froze to death. Engines and weapons became inoperable. A mechanised army ground to a chilling halt. Panzer commanders peered through field glasses at the domes of Moscow fewer than 20 kilometres away.

When Hitler turned his tanks towards Stalingrad and the oil fields of the (warmer) Caucasus the following summer, only death and destruction awaited his Sixth Army there, and the once seemingly invincible Wehrmacht formations.

Eventually an inexorable wave of Soviet retribution roared across Eastern Europe and into the streets of Berlin. On the Eastern Front, Hitler's reach had exceeded his grasp, revealing the Führer's destiny to die, along with his dream of world domination, amid the rubble of his capital city.



PARIS EDITION

EXTRA THE STARS AND STRIPES EXTRA

Daily Newspaper of U.S. Armed Forces in the European Theater of Operations

Vol. 1—No. 279 1 Fr. 1 Fr. Wednesday, May 2, 1945

HITLER DEAD

Fuehrer Fell at CP, German Radio Says; Doenitz at Helm, Vows War Will Continue

Churchill Hints Peace Is at Hand

A special edition of *The Stars And Stripes*, a newspaper for US soldiers, reports on Hitler's death

THE SHEER SCALE OF OPERATION BARBAROSSA

THE WEHRMACHT BOASTED A TOTAL OF

134 DIVISIONS at full fighting strength

+73 DIVISIONS for deployment behind the front

3.5 MILLION GERMAN TROOPS

300,000 FINNS

1 MILLION GERMAN ALLIED TROOPS

50,000 SLOVAKIAN TROOPS

250,000 ROMANIANS

THE GERMANS HAD

3,580 TANKS

2,700 AIRCRAFT

500,000 TRUCKS

7,184 GUNS

The capture of Kiev took

665,000 PRISONERS

884 TANKS

3,000 GUNS

80% of all German combat deaths occurred on the Eastern Front

PARANOIA & DEMISE

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Lingering ideological differences spawned a frosty stand-off between the powers

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Stalin's death sent shockwaves around the world, triggering mass grief - and celebration

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Behind the doors of his dacha were the men, women and children in Stalin's life

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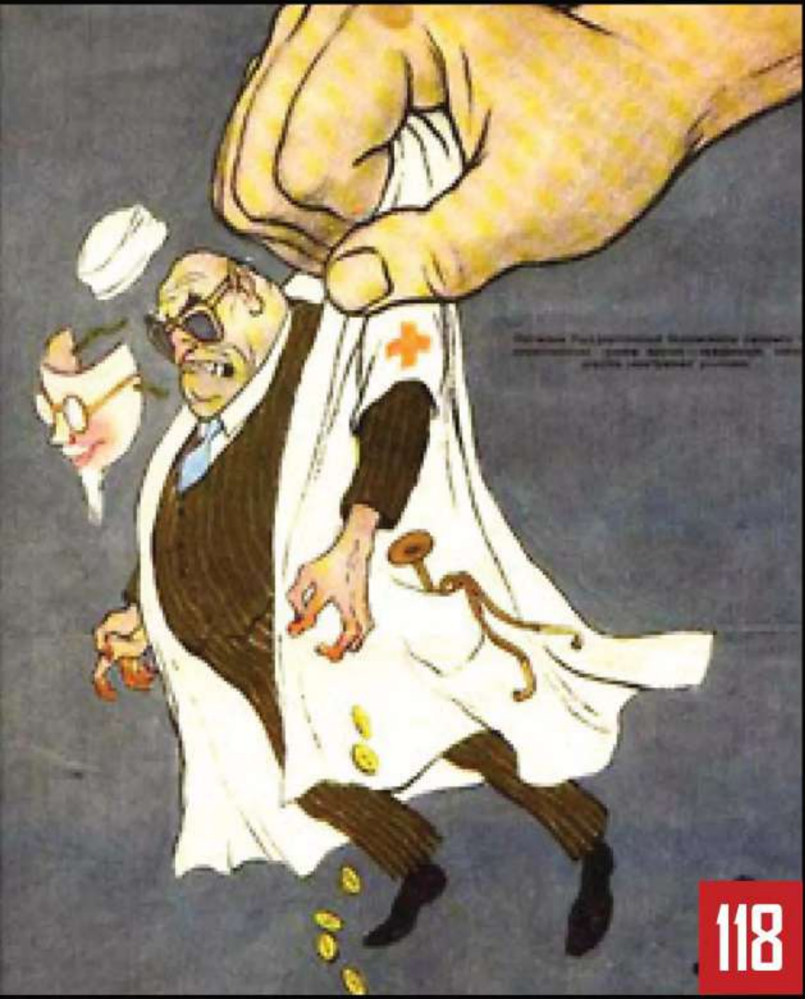
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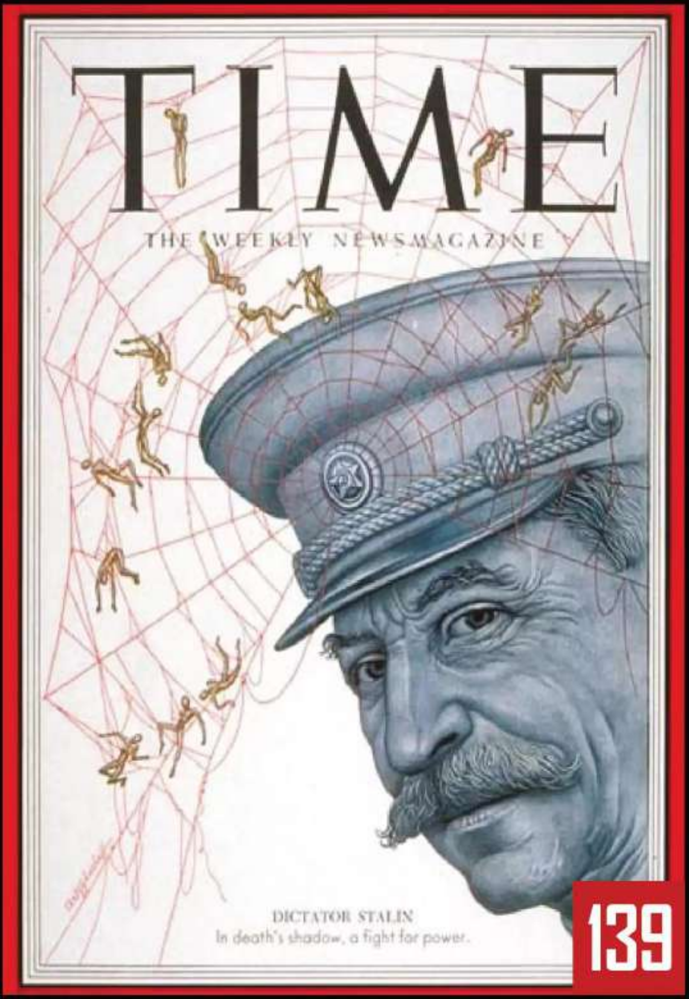
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SEEDS OF THE COLD WAR

Despite their World War II victory over a common enemy, lingering ideological differences between the Western democracies and the Soviet Union spawned a frosty stand-off

An ancient proverb pragmatically states: 'The enemy of my enemy is my friend.' And so it was during World War II as the United States, United Kingdom and the Soviet Union set aside their vastly differing political and ideological perspectives to defeat the common peril of Nazi Germany.

From the beginning, however, the bonds that brought unlikely allies together to win the war were strained. It was a marriage of convenience punctuated by several salient facts. The Soviet Union had signed a non-aggression pact with the Nazis in 1939 and actively participated in the invasion and partition of Poland while outright annexing the Baltic States of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia. The Soviets had also fought a bitter war of northern expansion against Finland in 1939-40, prompting the UK to consider intervention on the side of the Finns. Furthermore, Western observers remained keenly aware of the stated Soviet goal to export communist ideology across the globe.

For their part, the Soviets were always wary. They remembered Western support and even armed intervention against their regime during the Russian Civil War that followed the Bolshevik Revolution. The United States had also delayed acknowledgment of the USSR as a player on the world stage, waiting until 1933 to grant full diplomatic recognition. The Poles invaded Russian-held Ukraine in 1919; so from the USSR's perspective, the 1939 invasion of Poland was just retribution and part of a larger effort to create a buffer against future incursions from the West.

The Germans had ravaged Russia from that direction in 1914, only one example of numerous aggressor armies that utilised the western approaches to the Russian frontier as a highway for invasion. The United States and United Kingdom, the Soviets believed, would never understand their lingering insecurity and the need to maintain a sphere of influence on their borders.

Operation Barbarossa, the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941, shifted the paradigm precipitously. With Lend-Lease aid from the United States, the Red Army eventually rallied and rolled toward the Nazi capital of Berlin from the east in 1944 and 1945; however, Soviet casualties were staggering. While the United States and United Kingdom considered offensive options against Germany, the Soviets shouldered the brunt of the Allied effort against the Nazis. When the war was finally over, 20 million Soviet military personnel and civilians had perished.

Soviet Premier Joseph Stalin perpetually feared that the US and UK would negotiate a separate peace with the Germans. He clamoured for a second front in Western Europe to ease the pressure on the Red Army. The Americans and British opted for landings in North Africa in the autumn of 1942, then Sicily and Italy the following year. Finally, in 1944, British and American forces crossed the English Channel, landing in Normandy to undertake a concerted offensive towards Germany itself. Stalin's suspicions were only confirmed – that his 'allies' had intentionally delayed the cross-Channel assault so that the death struggle between the Nazis and the Red Army would bleed the Soviet Union dry.

"JOSEPH STALIN PERPETUALLY FEARED THAT THE US AND UK WOULD NEGOTIATE A SEPARATE PEACE WITH GERMANY"

From left, The Big Three, Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin, pose during their historic meeting at Yalta in 1945 village of Torgau on the Elbe River in April 1945, splitting the Third Reich in two, the rift between the strategic partners grew even wider. Western leaders were worried that the Soviets had gobbled up huge swathes of Eastern Europe. Would they simply withdraw when the war was over? When the Germans formally surrendered to the British and Americans in a schoolhouse in Reims, France, on 7 May 1945, a Soviet representative was present and signed the surrender document. For Stalin, however, it was not good enough. The Soviets demanded a second surrender in Berlin hours later.

With eyes firmly fixed on the balance of power, the map of post-war Europe, and the extension of influence into the emerging Third World, the Big Three - President Franklin D Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet Premier Stalin - met at the Black Sea resort of Yalta in the Crimea on 4-11 February 1945. A previously agreed upon protocol for zones of occupation in Germany and Austria was ratified, and the cities of Berlin and Vienna were also to be divided into such zones.

Although Roosevelt and Churchill secured a timetable for Soviet entry into the war in the Pacific against Japan and established some ground rules for the formation of the United Nations, the status of Poland became one of the first tangible bones of contention as the alliance, nearing victory, began to crumble.

Stalin stated, "Russia has sinned against Poland in the past... the Soviet government wishes to atone for those sins... Poland must be strong... and the Soviet Union is interested in the creation of a mighty, free and independent Poland." Ever suspicious of Stalin, Churchill believed that the Soviet leader was nothing more than a wolf in sheep's clothing.

Regardless of Stalin's promising declarations, Red Army troops already occupied Poland, and the communists were undoubtedly determined to preserve the country's interim pro-Soviet government. Conversely, the US and UK contended that the Polish government-in-exile more accurately represented the true will of the Polish people. Roosevelt conceded to ambiguous language that a more broadly based government would be enabled in Poland through free elections at some future date, but did not specify when. Although some historians believe that Roosevelt sold out to Stalin on the Polish question, he had already been forced to acknowledge that Russian troops were already in control there.

During the fall of Berlin, Soviet soldiers display their red flag emblazoned with the hammer and sickle over the ruined streets

By his own admission, US president Harry S Truman underestimated his Soviet counterpart, Joseph Stalin

"THE SOVIET DICTATOR BELIEVED THAT HIS FORMER ALLIES WOULD BEGIN TO BICKER AND SQUABBLE AMONG THEMSELVES"

Naively or not, the president believed that the most opportune time for the resolution of quickly emerging post-war issues was after the end of the fighting. However, Roosevelt did not live to see it. He died of a cerebral hemorrhage two months after Yalta and only weeks prior to the pivotal Potsdam Conference, held in a suburb of Berlin from 17 July through 2 August 1945.

When the victors of World War II convened once again, two of the leaders were newcomers. President Harry S Truman represented the United States, and the British electorate turned Churchill out of office in the midst of the conference in favour of a new prime minister, Clement Attlee. At Potsdam, the Big Three agreed on several aspects of the administration of occupied Germany, including an initiative to prosecute Nazi war criminals, the issuing of joint statements on denazification and other topics, and the implementation of a process providing for war reparations to the Soviet Union derived from its occupation zone in Germany.

President Truman, who had only recently been made aware of the existence of the atomic bomb himself, had actually delayed the start of the Potsdam Conference to receive word that the US' new wonder weapon was fully functional. Then, during one of the sessions, Truman made a point of leaning close to Stalin, whispering in his ear, and commenting that the United States was in possession of a "new weapon of unusual destructive force." Stalin replied dryly that he hoped the United States would "make good use of this new addition to the Allied arsenal."

Although Truman did not specifically mention a nuclear weapon, Stalin had been informed of the progress of the Manhattan Project through his extensive espionage network in the United States. A week after the leaders departed Potsdam, the US dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ending World War II in the Pacific. After the Americans had demonstrated the destructive power of their new weapon, they offered the Soviets virtually no role in the post-war occupation and rehabilitation of Japan. Forced to contend with the US nuclear monopoly, Stalin became even more contentious as time passed.

Soon after the war in Europe ended, refugees began to flee westward from the great nations where the Soviet military was ensconced. Even before the end of the war, the Soviets had orchestrated the establishment of the Communist government in Albania. As early as 1944, Churchill recognised the shape of things to come in Eastern Europe. "Make no mistake, all of the Balkans apart from Greece are going to be Bolshevised, and there is nothing I can do to prevent it. There is nothing I can do for Poland either," he lamented. Soon enough, the Greek government would actually be fighting for its life against a communist insurgency backed by Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria.

By 1946, communist rule had been consolidated in Bulgaria and Romania. The following year, Hungary followed suit as the already dominant communists unmasked their control of Poland. In 1948, Soviet-backed communists had seized power in Czechoslovakia via a coup d'état. In that same year amid rising tensions, the Soviets began to ease German communist leaders into power in their

American soldiers wade toward shore during the 1944 invasion of Normandy. Stalin believed the Western Allies deliberately delayed the cross-Channel attack to weaken the USSR

occupation zone. In 1949, the German Democratic Republic, known as East Germany, was declared.

Early in the post-war period, Stalin and his advisors had counted on an economic downturn in the West. Top-ranking Soviet economists predicted that the US government would substantially reduce defence spending and that pent-up consumer demand would be unleashed on a vulnerable economy then transitioning from wartime to peacetime production, touching off rampant inflation in the United States and precipitating a severe recession. The Soviet dictator also believed that his former allies would begin to bicker and squabble among themselves, each vying for economic supremacy as the democracies regressed into pre-war policies of colonialism and exploitation of underdeveloped countries.

As neither of these scenarios ultimately materialised, The Soviets became more determined than ever to protect their own interests, as well as trying to export their ideology across Europe and elsewhere in the hope of creating a truly communist continent that the Soviet Union would utterly dominate.

American possession of the atomic bomb compounded Stalin's concerns for Soviet security. Four long years elapsed from Hiroshima and Nagasaki to the first successful detonation of a Soviet nuclear device on 29 August 1949. Meanwhile, the Soviets were obliged to consider to frightening possibility of a nuclear strike in the event of an outbreak of war with the West, even

THE IRON CURTAIN SPEECH

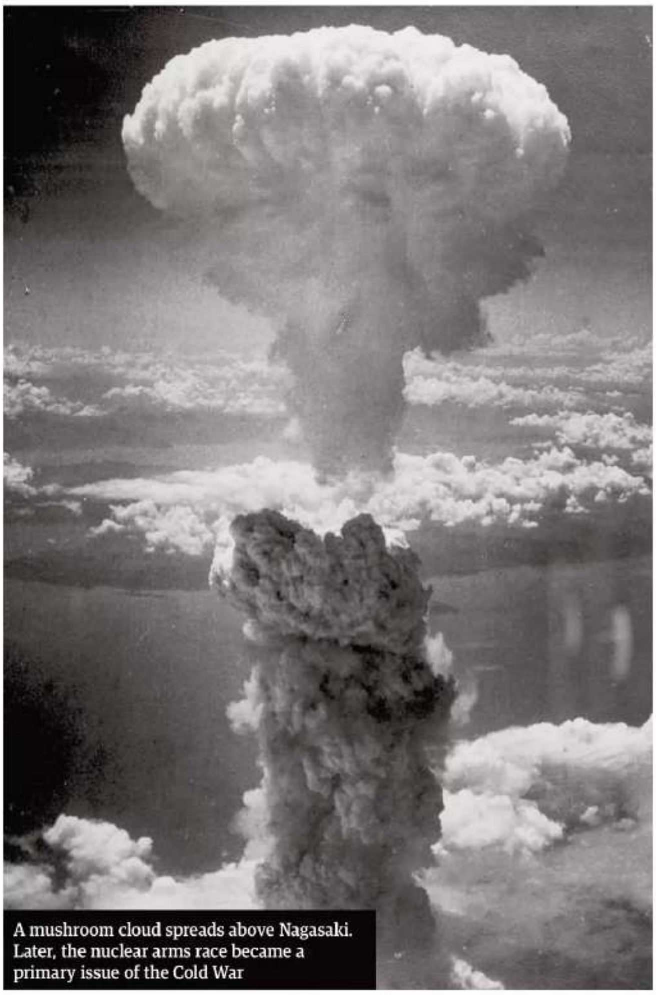
On 5 March 1946, at Westminster College in Fulton, Missouri, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill delivered one of the earliest acknowledgments of the Cold War

While President Harry Truman listened intently, Churchill, who had lost a bid for re-election the previous year, eloquently addressed his audience on the need for a closer relationship between the United Kingdom and the United States.

Declaring that there was "nothing which they admire so much as strength, and there is nothing for which they have less respect than for military weakness," Churchill lashed the Soviet Union for its policies in Eastern Europe, warning of their efforts to spread communism.

In measured tone, he noted, "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent." Immediately, the phrase 'Iron Curtain' came into widespread use, identifying the Eastern European sphere that was now under the control of the Cold War adversary.

Former Prime Minister Winston Churchill coined the term 'Iron Curtain' to describe the division of Europe



A mushroom cloud spreads above Nagasaki. Later, the nuclear arms race became a primary issue of the Cold War

Allied troops march through the streets of Vladivostok in 1918 during the intervention in the Russian Civil War

though the Red Army greatly outnumbered the American and British conventional forces stationed on the continent.

By the end of World War II, the prevailing American anti-communist strategy was embodied in a policy called 'Containment'. In 1946, George Kennan, an American diplomat, became the foremost advocate of Containment. Kennan wrote that the Soviet Union was actually a "political force committed fanatically to the belief that with the US there can be no permanent modus vivendi." Further, he reasoned that the West was compelled to pursue "long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies."

In the wake of the global war, along with the countless lives that had been lost, the economies of the nations of Europe were devastated. Amid the growing threat of the westward expansion of communism, the United States reconsidered a previously held position on the status of post-war Germany within the family of nations.

During the Second Quebec Conference of September 1944, President Roosevelt and Prime Minister Churchill had agreed to adopt the Morgenthau Plan, a proposal offered by US Secretary of the Treasury Henry Morgenthau Jr. The Morgenthau Plan essentially advocated the eradication of Germany's ability to wage war in the future. The armament industry was to be eliminated, and any associated enterprises would follow suit or be drastically curtailed. Germany would be pacified as a non-threatening pastoral country.

Within two years, the situation had changed. The most promising bulwark against Soviet expansion was the restoration of economic prosperity in Europe. Displaced people who returned to destroyed homes, without jobs, without futures, and without hope, were ripe for the absorption of communist philosophy. On 6 September 1946, Secretary of State James F Byrnes travelled to Germany and delivered a groundbreaking speech that shredded the Morgenthau Plan and warned the Soviets that the United States would maintain a military presence in Western Europe indefinitely.

Byrnes later explained, "The nub of our programme was to win the German people... It was a battle between us and Russia over minds." The Joint Chiefs of Staff Directive 1779 soon followed. This policy document related to the revised slate of goals that the 'Free World' sought to achieve in post-war Germany. It stated plainly, "An orderly, prosperous Europe requires the economic contributions of a stable and productive Germany."

On 12 March 1947, President Truman delivered a landmark speech to a joint session of Congress, declaring that the United States would provide assistance to any democratic nation threatened with overthrow by internal or external "authoritarian" influences. Hand in hand with the Containment policy, the president was clear that such aid might take the form of economic, humanitarian or military support. He requested

Wir wollen
KOHLE
Wir wollen
BROT

Shortages of food and coal prompted these German citizens to protest in 1947, prior to the implementation of the Marshall Plan

"THE PRESIDENT WAS CLEAR THAT SUCH AID MIGHT TAKE THE FORM OF ECONOMIC, HUMANITARIAN OR MILITARY SUPPORT"

Secretary of State George C Marshall, shown in Army uniform, was the architect of the European relief plan that bore his name

THE HOUSE UN-AMERICAN ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

For the US public, fear of communism was nothing new as the Cold War dawned

The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) had been formed in 1938, its mission to investigate elements within society that were potentially traitorous or disloyal to the US government. Investigations during the Roosevelt administration were generally rebuffed. However, the advent of the Cold War gave the HUAC new life, wielding Congressional power to subpoena witnesses and to hold individuals in contempt. The HUAC began a series of hearings in 1947 that implicated hundreds of people, labelling many witnesses as 'Red' when they were defensive or non-compliant during testimony. The film industry was hit hard. More than 500 individuals were blacklisted, impeded from pursuing their livelihoods because of perceived left-wing sympathies. Riding the crest of the anti-communist wave in the 1950s, Senator Joseph McCarthy broadened the HUAC model to include government employees. The US Senate eventually censured McCarthy.

Actor Gary Cooper, a motion picture star, testifies before the House Un-American Activities Committee in the autumn of 1947

"WHILE ACCOMPLISHING TREMENDOUS HUMANITARIAN RELIEF, THE MARSHALL PLAN CONTRIBUTED MIGHTILY TO THE CONTAINMENT OF COMMUNISM"

that Congress authorise $400 million in aid to Greece and Turkey, where the Soviets appeared to be fomenting continued political unrest.

The president's stance came to be known as the Truman Doctrine, and in order to further implement the policy, a massive foreign aid initiative in Europe had to be developed. General George C Marshall, Army Chief of Staff and a close advisor to President Roosevelt during the war years, was appointed Secretary of State in early 1947, and later on in the year he outlined a sweeping aid programme intended to revitalise the European economy after the war years. The Soviets declined to participate in the programme, which has become known to history as the Marshall Plan, and forbade their Eastern European vassals from doing so. The Marshall Plan became operational on 8 April 1948, and in the next four years it provided $13 billion in American aid to 16 nations to energise the strapped European economy, rebuilding infrastructure, modernising industry and feeding the hungry citizens. While accomplishing tremendous humanitarian relief, the Marshall Plan contributed mightily to the containment of communism.

The Soviet response to the Marshall Plan was dramatic. The communists developed their own economic aid package, referred to as the Molotov Plan in reference to Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov. The regime change in Czechoslovakia was a direct intervention to prevent that nation from accepting Marshall Plan assistance. In June 1948, the Soviets closed the roads leading to West Berlin and shut off electrical power and water, in an attempt to force the US, UK and France to abandon it.

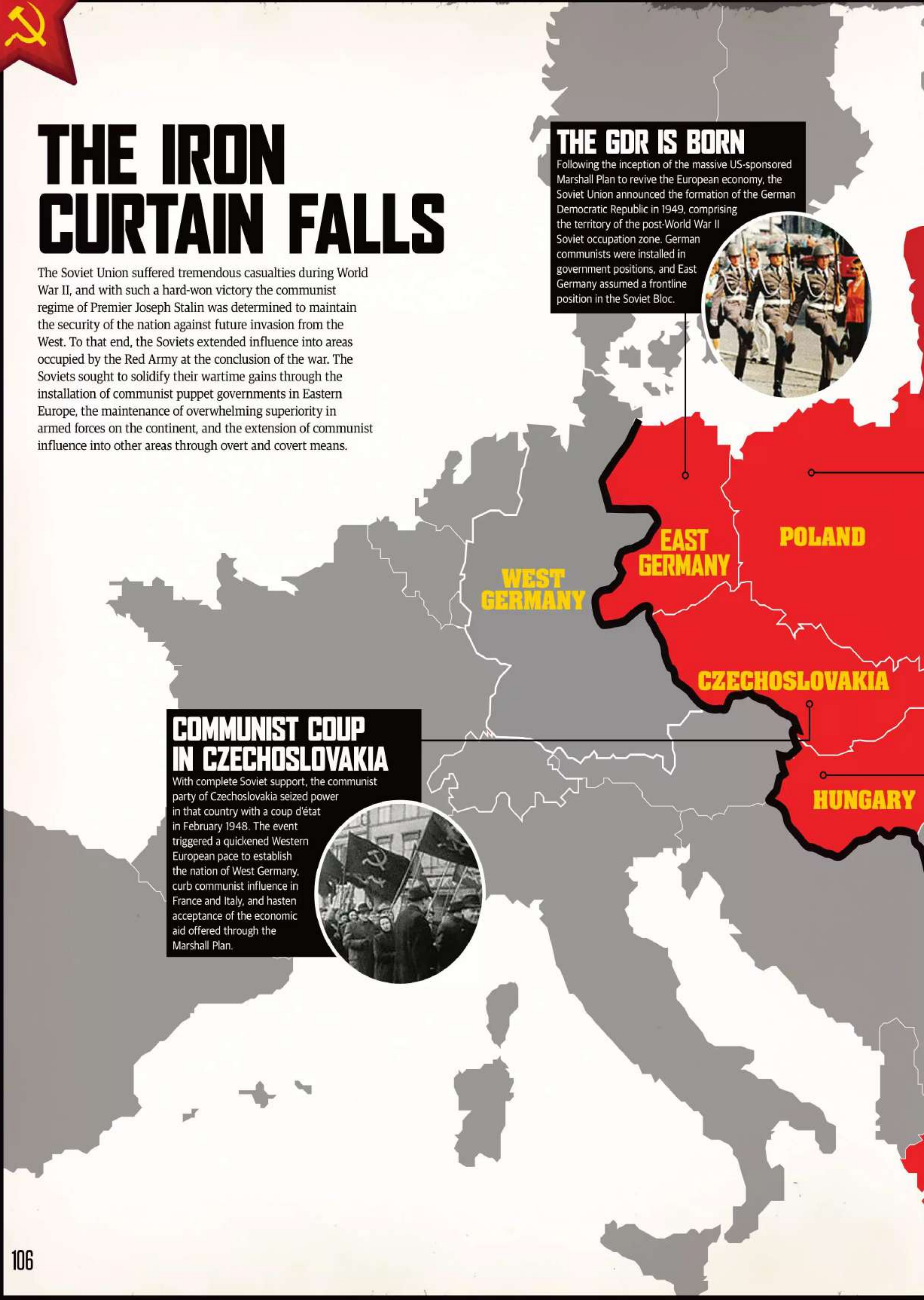
The Berlin Blockade resulted in the Berlin Airlift to maintain essential supplies to the population of West Berlin. Since the military presence of the Western powers in Europe was dwarfed by the sheer number of Red Army tanks and troops present, the US and United Kingdom undertook the massive air relief effort that proved highly successful. In May 1949, the Soviets admitted defeat and lifted the blockade. The Berlin Airlift resulted in two unintended consequences. It strengthened the ties of friendship between the US and UK and the people of West Germany, while the embarrassed Soviets hardened further diplomatically.

From a pragmatic point of view, the West could do very little as the Soviets tightened their grip on Eastern Europe. By the time President Dwight D Eisenhower was elected in 1952, the phrase 'Iron Curtain' (coined by Churchill) was in vogue, describing the closed off nature of the communist states. Still, the Cold War heated up steadily during the coming years as the superpowers vied for pre-eminence in the Third World through direct economic aid, proxy wars, espionage and diplomatic bombast, while the lingering threat of nuclear war and an uncontrolled arms race gave rise to the theory of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD). Hotspots on the Korean Peninsula and in Vietnam and Cuba emerged, while the Middle East and the continent of Africa were drawn into the volatile mix.

Although the cataclysm of World War II hastened the coming of the Cold War, ideological and economic differences had already sown the seeds of the conflict. The real tragedy of this half century of constant contention lies, at least in part, with those whose inability to put their ideologies aside and reason together for the good of the world resulted in years of strife.

THE IRON CURTAIN FALLS

The Soviet Union suffered tremendous casualties during World War II, and with such a hard-won victory the communist regime of Premier Joseph Stalin was determined to maintain the security of the nation against future invasion from the West. To that end, the Soviets extended influence into areas occupied by the Red Army at the conclusion of the war. The Soviets sought to solidify their wartime gains through the installation of communist puppet governments in Eastern Europe, the maintenance of overwhelming superiority in armed forces on the continent, and the extension of communist influence into other areas through overt and covert means.



THE GDR IS BORN

Following the inception of the massive US-sponsored Marshall Plan to revive the European economy, the Soviet Union announced the formation of the German Democratic Republic in 1949, comprising the territory of the post-World War II Soviet occupation zone. German communists were installed in government positions, and East Germany assumed a frontline position in the Soviet Bloc.

COMMUNIST COUP IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA

With complete Soviet support, the communist party of Czechoslovakia seized power in that country with a coup d'état in February 1948. The event triggered a quickened Western European pace to establish the nation of West Germany, curb communist influence in France and Italy, and hasten acceptance of the economic aid offered through the Marshall Plan.

USSR

POLISH PERSPECTIVE

The Soviet Red Army occupied Poland during its westward march across Europe, eliminating organised opposition to a pro-communist government in the process. The future of Poland was a primary issue during the Yalta Conference in early 1945. Although Premier Joseph Stalin offered assurances of free elections in a reasonable period of time, his promises were never fulfilled.

FORCE OF ARMS IN HUNGARY

Pro-Soviet political manoeuvring resulted in the installation of a communist regime in Hungary during the late 1940s. Although the nation was within the Soviet sphere of influence, dissatisfaction among the people resulted in open rebellion in 1956. With the introduction of Red Army troops and tanks, however, the uprising was crushed.

GREECE

GROWING UNREST IN GREECE

During the late 1940s, communist paramilitary forces that had previously battled the Nazis during World War II mounted an insurgency against the elected government of Greece. The Soviets supported the insurgency despite quiet guarantees of non-interference. Initially British and then American aid enabled the pro-democracy government forces to eventually quell the uprising.

THE OPENING EXCHANGES

As the divide between the USSR and the West increased, a series of events around the world would take the conflict to new and terrifying heights

Even as the flags of the Third Reich were torn down and the final embers of World War II began to cool, the fragile trust between the Allies was already splintering. One shadow had been driven from Europe, but another was beginning to form in the eyes of the West - a red menace, one that was swallowing territories and nations behind an iron curtain that stretched high, far and deep.

To the Soviets, the West was a decadent, greedy clique that thought itself above the people of Russian and their great sacrifice during the six long years of World War II. Neither wished to engage the other in full-on warfare - the scars of WWII ran deep, after all - but the willingness to do so, that potency of that unspoken threat, would drive what became the Cold War.

As a decades-long battle of political sparring, military tensions and espionage, the Cold War was unlike any other conflict the world had faced. It ran on fear and propaganda, conjuring a terror that filled the imaginations of every man, woman and child: nuclear war. Yet, while it represented one the most unconventional wars in history, it almost transformed into all-out bloodshed on many occasions.

These were flashpoints in the history of the 20th century - political, economical and militaristic pivots upon which the fate of the world was placed. From the Korean War to the crisis at the Suez Canal, these events were the Cold War burning at its hottest, one political disaster or military power play away from a third global conflict. As tensions rose to new heights between the expanding Soviet Union and the communism-fearing West, the world watched with bated breath as the most powerful men on the planet came to blows...

"AS TENSIONS ROSE TO NEW HEIGHTS BETWEEN THE SOVIET UNION AND THE WEST, THE WORLD WATCHED WITH BATED BREATH"

The Korean War (1950-1953) is often seen as a proxy war between the USSR and the West

THE BERLIN BLOCKADE

The embers of World War II had barely cooled before the Cold War began with the subdivision of Germany and Berlin

The war was barely over and a new conflict was already beginning to form. Adolf Hitler was dead and the Nazi war machine had been driven back into Germany and beaten into submission. The Allies were victorious, but that victory hid a division that had been growing since the tide of the war turned against the Reich. As already agreed at the Yalta Conference, the Allies divided Germany into four sectors: the largest was taken by the USSR, claimed in the name of the sheer human sacrifice it had made in defending Stalingrad and pursuing the Nazis.

The rest of the fallen nation was divided between the other largest members of the Allies - France, Britain and the United States. Berlin was also divided in much the same way, despite residing well within the zone occupied by the Soviet Union. However, in spite of the image of international cooperation being shown to the media, those tensions hadn't abated - in fact, they were growing hotter with every passing day - and with the positioning and the division of the German capital proving the first political salvo of what soon became the Cold War, those divisions were about to split even further.

The Soviet presence was not a welcome one in Germany. In Berlin especially, the elections of 1946 saw the German people vote overwhelmingly in favour of non-communist candidates; for Stalin and rest of the Party in Moscow, it was proof positive of a democratic plan to poison the future of a true, united Germany under communism. In 1947, those Soviet fears were taken to new heights when Britain and the United States decided that Germany needed a new currency if it was to enter the economy of a post-war world.

By 1947, what would later become West Germany was seeing a huge influx of German citizens, driven across the borders as the Soviet Union began actively expelling those of German ancestry from areas in East Germany (by 1950, around 12 million people had fled the Soviet zone). The Soviet refusal to provide supplies for these exiles only urged the Allies to act with greater expediency, and in the first half of 1948 France, the US and Britain met in London to discuss the German question, resulting in creation of that new currency, and of a new democratic nation: West Germany.

The Soviet response to these meetings was swift and resolute. On 28 March 1948, all traffic passing through the Soviet zone was now subject to mandatory searches. The Soviet control over the railways was tightened to a chokehold, forcing Britain, France and the US to reschedule all military supplies to travel by air instead of rail. This 'Little Lift' was just the beginning as Soviet fighter jets started flying into West Berlin airspace, harassing or 'buzzing' military and commercial aircraft. When the Allies introduced the newly minted Deutsche Mark on 18 June 1948, the Soviets took it as an act of economic war.

In truth, the Soviet blockade had begun as soon as it began tightening its control of East Germany, but by 25 June the Soviets had cut off all food supplies to non-Soviet areas of Berlin and shut off all electricity. All roads were closed and that hold on the railways forced train travel to a standstill. As the Soviets began the blockade of Berlin, West Berlin had 36 days' worth of food to maintain its population and panic was setting in. That panic grew all the worse when West Berliners realised the 1.5 million-strong Soviet army greatly outnumbered the stripped back, post-war forces of Britain, France the United States.

It was a stalemate, with the Soviets believing they could force the West to abandon Berlin for good and the West refusing to believe Stalin would risk a Third World War. Refusing to leave West Berlin to wither, and assured the Soviets would not go as far as to shoot Western planes out of the sky, the US and Britain started an airlift. Co-ordinating with the RAF, the US Air Force began flying in supplies, with planes touching down every three minutes. It was a huge undertaking with more than 5,000 tons of food and coal being flown in daily to keep West Berlin alive.

The Soviets did all they could to maintain the blockade, but with the USSR unwilling to start a war it was incapable of waging, the West had called Moscow's bluff. The strict blockade on travel, electricity and food supplies held for a staggering 318 days before the Soviets eventually ceased their aggressive manoeuvring. Over almost a year, the West had airlifted more than 2.3 million tons of supplies and ensured democracy wasn't suffocated out of Berlin.

The Berlin Blockade may have come to an end on 12 May 1949, and the airlift on 30 September, but the crisis calcified the Cold War into a confrontation the world now recognised. Being unable to muscle the West out of Berlin entirely, the Soviet Union withdrew behind a newly fortified Iron Curtain. It would set the tone of the conflict to come: two sides daring the other to take that final step and send the world into all-out war.

Only three flight paths to Berlin were made available by the Soviet Union, turning the Berlin Airlift into a procession of British and American planes

Apart from the infamous Black Friday, the Berlin Airlift ran like clockwork as the Soviets continued to enforce the blockade

BLACK FRIDAY AND THE AIRLIFTS

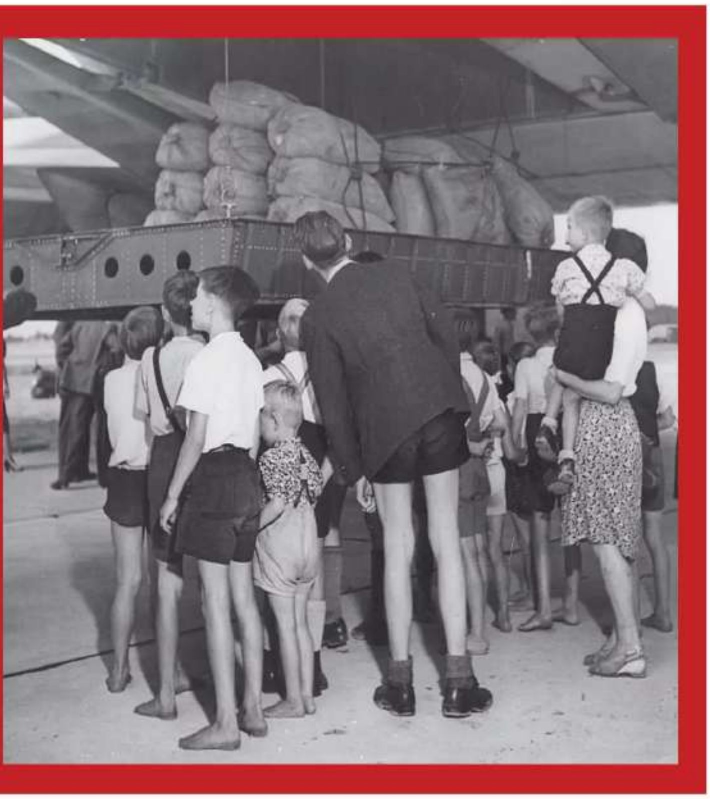
Keeping West Berlin's head above the surface was a monumental task for the West, and it almost came crashing down on one fateful day

Supporting half a city full of two million potentially starving German citizens (a population that had swollen with the men, women and children driven over the border from Soviet-controlled East Germany) was no simple challenge and it tasked the West with co-ordinating a phenomenal aerial supply chain that would have to keep moving around the clock.

The city required a daily food ration of 646 tons of flour and wheat, 109 tons of meat and fish, 180 tons of sugar, 5 tons of whole milk, 64 tons of fat, 180 tons of dehydrated potatoes, 11 tons of coffee, 125 tons of cereal, 19 tons of powdered milk, 3 tons of fresh yeast for baking, 144 tons of dehydrated vegetables, 38 tons of salt and 10 tons of cheese. Vast quantities of coal and fuel were also needed.

With over 275,000 flights in total used to maintain the supply lines, and keep democracy alive in the German capital, the operation constantly walked along a knife edge. The true test of the airlift campaign came on Friday 13 August 1948 when rain clouds hung so heavy over Berlin, pilots could barely see the sky in front of them. With rain lashing down, a C-54 cargo plane laden with supplies crashed and exploded, while a second burst its tyres and almost crashed just trying to avoid the first downed aircraft. A third plane barely escaped calamity when it misjudged its position and landed on a half-constructed runway.

The high turnover of planes meant a high chance of mid-air collisions. Ground control immediately grounded any planes currently being unloaded and advised those heading in to pull away while the weather held. Fortunately, no one was killed, but it was a stark reminder just how quickly such an operation could go wrong.



THE KOREAN WAR

When North Korea poured troops south across the 38th parallel border, the Cold War faced its first true military campaign

The prelude to the Korean War began just after World War II reached its bloody climax. The Japanese Empire, once the proud supporter of Hitler's Third Reich and the most feared power in Asia, had been crushed by the atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 and the aggressive drive of the US assault in the Pacific. With Japan brought to heel, the Allies began holding summits to decide what should be done with the nation and its many conquered territories. One such territory was the historical state of Korea.

Bordered by China, Korea had been a colony held under Japanese rule since the 19th century and formed a key part of the Japanese Empire's strong territorial portfolio in the Pacific. After 35 years of colonial control, the Allies agreed to look after the territory while it prepared a road to eventual independence. As with Germany following the end of the war, Korea was divided into sectors - the north fell under the supervision of the Soviet Union while the south became the responsibility of the United States.

Under the Soviets, a Stalinist government was established with the political figurehead of Kim Il-sung chosen as its supreme leader. Communism was infused into every branch of new government, while a standing army was bolstered by Russian weaponry and artillery. The Soviets were determined to establish a key communist state in the Pacific in the wake of World War II and North Korea was the perfect proxy to hold back the influence of the US in the region.

The United States had a tougher task in establishing a government in the south. A number of political parties and groups were vying for power in the wake of Japan's withdrawal, and the man the US eventually backed - Syngman Rhee - was deeply anti-communist and felt force was needed to bring Korea into one unified state. With the Soviet-backed Democratic People's Republic of Korea pointing its shells towards the Republic of Korea in the south, the tensions were bound to boil over into all-out conflict.

By the spring of 1950, Kim Il-sung had successfully convinced Stalin to support a military invasion that would unite Korea once more and create an even stronger communist state in the Pacific. Believing the south to be weakened from the guerilla attacks and the US withdrawal, Stalin signed off on a Soviet-supported invasion that would also use troops and weaponry from Chairman Mao and the People's Republic of China. Stalin saw the benefit in creating a socialist power base in Asia, but refused to let Russian troops take part to avoid an open war with the US.

The North Korean invasion caught the US and Britain completely off guard, with the US scrabbling to recall peacekeeping forces from Japan to meet

North Korea's armies were bolstered by veterans serving in China and weaponry supplied by Stalin and the Soviet Union

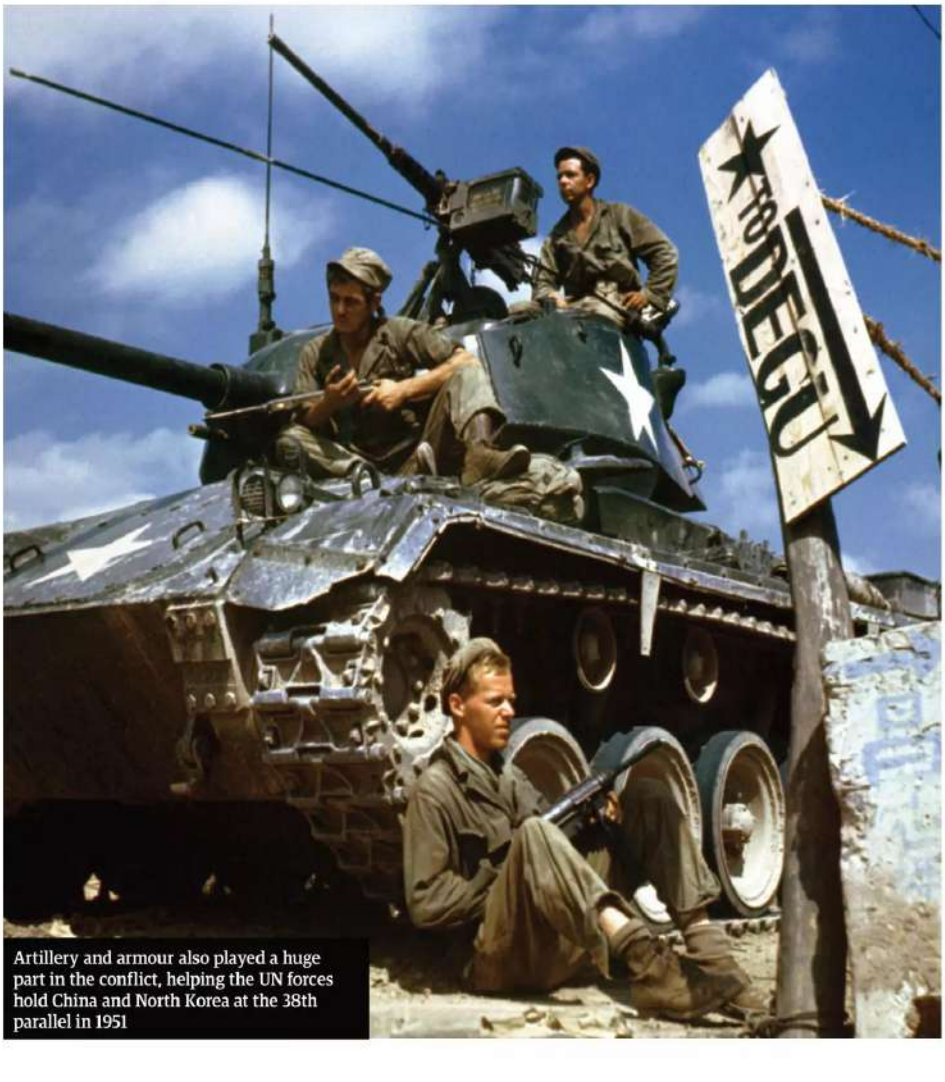
“BY 1950, KIM IL-SUNG HAD SUCCESSFULLY CONVINCED STALIN TO SUPPORT A MILITARY INVASION THAT WOULD REUNITE KOREA” the DPRK armies as it rolled into South Korea. However, the small force wasn't well-equipped enough to deal with a Soviet-backed army that had been training in secret for months. The DPRK moved towards the vital port of Pusan, forcing the US, Britain and Australia to send forces to hold them off. The United Nations sanctioned the response and the forces of the West gathered at the Pusan bridgehead to hold them back.

The fall back into open warfare shocked the West, but it was soon consolidating its forces, forcing the DPRK to retreat across the 38th parallel with a mixture of key sea-based landings and the dominance of the US Air Force in the skies. The Western forces, now acting under the sanction of the United Nations, had North Korea on the retreat, but they hadn't considered on one formidable factor rising from beyond the North Korean border: China.

As the US forces pushed towards the Manchurian border, news came that Peking would not tolerate Western forces so close to its territory and would act immediately to protect its sovereignty. It seemed a bizarre notion that China would risk engaging the US in open warfare, but under the pretence of a threat to its borders, China launched its armies in November 1950 and sent the UN into disarray. The sheer onslaught of the Chinese attack drove the South Korean army and those of the UN back across the 38th parallel, helping the DPRK push its foes back as far as the South Korean capital, Seoul.

But more US and British troops landed by the spring of 1951, so the UN began forcing the Chinese and the North Koreans back over the 38th parallel. Rather than being overzealous and pushing further, the UN forces held the line at the Korean Division and for the next two years the conflict descended into an exchange of artillery blows across the border. It was here the 38th parallel went from a patrolled line to a heavily fortified no man's land littered with mines and barbed wire.

The Chinese eventually withdrew their forces, while the Soviets sat back and raised their hands in innocence of any involvement. By its conclusion, the conflict had claimed more than 2.5 million lives, including citizens killed in air raid bombings and artillery fire. North Korea would become more insular as a result, distanced from foreign powers as it attempted to build its own vision of a new communist future. For the West, the Korean War had been a costly battle, but one that had made a statement to the powers of China and the USSR: military aggression would not be tolerated, even if it meant war.



Artillery and armour also played a huge part in the conflict, helping the UN forces hold China and North Korea at the 38th parallel in 1951

NORTH KOREA AND THE CHINESE CIVIL WAR

Before China's timely intervention in the Korean War, North Korea would come to its aid during a grisly civil conflict

Chairman Mao's decision to aid North Korea in the war against its neighbour and the forces of the West may have seemed like a militaristic bolt out of the blue, but it was the product of a relationship that had been forged in another conflict. As the newly formed Democratic People's Republic of Korea looked across its northern border to the People's Republic of China, it saw the larger communist state engulfed in a civil conflict that threatened to tear the nation asunder.

The war itself, which raged between the CPC (Communist Party of China) and the Kuomintang (Nationalist) party from 1927 onwards, ceased when Japan invaded in 1937 and conquered Manchuria during World War II, but resumed soon after the end of the war as the two rival governments fought for total control of China's future. Seeing fellow communists struggling against the Chinese nationalists, North Korea began sending supplies and communist soldiers to its forces in Manchuria, eventually helping Mao and the CPC to defeat the Nationalists by the end of 1949.

North Korea's intervention might not have been the most dramatic of moves, but the gesture was not forgotten by the newly formed People's Republic of China. In thanks, Mao returned between 50,000 and 70,000 Korean veterans who served in the PLA to bolster the North Korean armies (a contribution that would serve the DPRK well in the conflict to come). China also promised to support North Korea should it ever decided to invade South Korea - a factor that would come into play when the invasion to come turned against the DPRK.

THE SUEZ CRISIS

As the Cold War continued to command the attention of the world, a new crisis arose in Egypt

On 26 July 1956, President Nasser of Egypt nationalised the Suez Canal. This act would alter the political landscape of the world forever. It provoked threats of nuclear war, and saw Britain surpassed by a new Western superpower: the US. In the long years of the Cold War, the Suez Crisis would prove a turning point.

A driven political leader, Nasser was becoming the face of the Arab world. He had great plans for Egypt, and with a landslide national vote in his favour following a bloodless overthrow of King Farouk I, the tactical neutralist looked to reshape his home. The US and Britain supported Nasser's new government, believing his anti-communist stance would stem the potential tide of socialism spreading through the Arab world. But Egypt was locked in a battle of wills with the newly formed state of Israel, forcing Nasser to seek arms and funding from overseas to modernise his armies.

The US agreed, but placed tight sanctions the Egyptian leader refused to accept. And so he turned to the Soviet Union, which was more than willing to supply Nasser with the arms and artillery needed to protect his nation from Israeli attacks in exchange for a deferred payment of grain. Despite this deal, the US and Britain were determined to bring Nasser on side and offered $270 million worth of funding to help finalise the construction of the powerful new Aswan High Dam. The future was indeed looking bright for Egypt, with support from both sides of the Cold War.

However, when the US and Britain heard that the Soviets had approached Nasser with a $1.12 billion deal at 2% interest for the construction of the dam, the two powers withdrew their offers. The Soviet deal never materialised, and with US and British funding now off the table, the need for drastic action had come. Without the dam, Egypt would continue to suffer heavy flooding from the Nile, so Nasser was forced to make a decision that would send his nation, and the world, into crisis. His attention turned to one place: the Suez Canal.

Built by the Suez Canal Company and opened in 1869, the 120-mile-long stretch of water charged tolls for all ships that passed through from the North Atlantic to the Indian Oceans, making it a great source of income for its owners. Nasser saw the Suez Canal as an opportunity that could not be ignored, and declared martial law in the canal zone. Seizing control of the Suez Canal Company, he promised his people the money made from the tolls would provide the funds Egypt needed to build the Aswan dam in just five years. But both the British and French governments had a vested interest in the region and feared that Nasser would cut off their supply of oil from the Persian Gulf.

When talks with Nasser failed to relieve the Egyptian hold on the Suez Canal, Britain and France turned to a new ally in the region: Israel. The self-defined Jewish state was one of Egypt's biggest political adversaries and the two had exchanged small military attacks over the years that had only exacerbated their adversarial relationship. Realising that invading Egypt would be seen as an act of war that the United Nations would never sanction, the UK and France used Israel as a proxy. When Israel sent ten brigades into the Suez region on 29 October 1956 to rout the Egyptian forces there, France and Britain stepped in to request a ceasefire and the withdrawal of both Israeli and Egyptian forces.

On 5 and 6 November, French and British forces landed at Port Fuad and Port Said and pushed the Israelis and Egyptians back, occupying the area themselves. However, the decision to move forces into the Suez Canal was unanimously condemned, at home and among other nations, with the USSR and the US calling for the UN to request the two nations leave the canal zone immediately. The Soviet Union, aware that its interests in the Middle East were under threat by two of Europe's most powerful nations, even went as far as threatening nuclear warfare.

Starting as a somewhat complicated domestic issue, the Suez Canal situation escalated into a crisis that threatened to upend the current alliances of the Cold War. Britain and France were reluctant to withdraw their forces, but the United Nations could not risk the incident turning into all-out warfare with the Soviets, so it began evacuating French and British forces on 22 December 1956. Three months later, the Israelis followed suit.

The Suez Canal was hugely important to the British and French governments due to the amount of oil transported through it from the Persian Gulf

ROYAL NAVY
095
420

Sea carriers, such as the HMS Eagle pictured here, helped the British and French stage a quick military response in Egypt

"BRITAIN AND FRANCE'S DECISION TO MOVE FORCES INTO THE SUEZ CANAL WAS UNANIMOUSLY CONDEMNED"

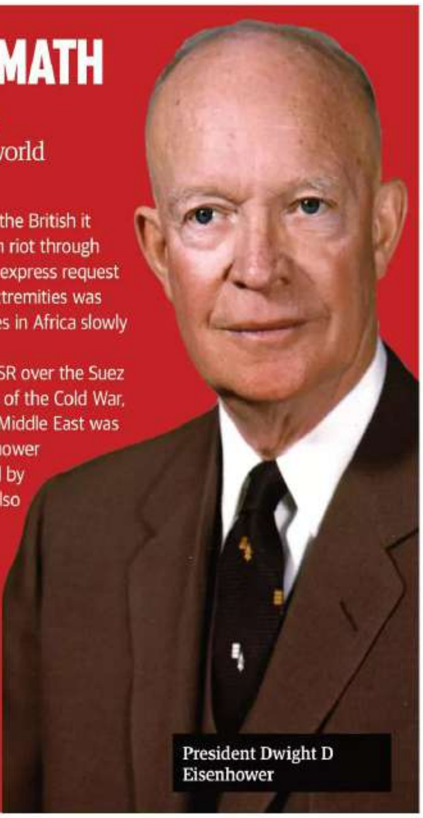
SUEZ CRISIS: THE AFTERMATH

With Britain and France forced to pull out their forces in shame, the political landscape of the world changed forever

The Suez Crisis was a turning point for every nation involved. For the British it marked the accelerated demise of its Empire as decolonisation ran riot through its overseas territories. Shamed into withdrawing its forces at the express request of the United States and the USSR, Britain's hold on its colonial extremities was broken forever. France suffered a similar outcome, with its colonies in Africa slowly falling to independence like dominoes.

And while the political alliance of the United States and the USSR over the Suez Crisis seemed like a new dawn for the two opposing superpowers of the Cold War, the distrust between them ran deeper than ever. For the US, the Middle East was a prime target for Soviet expansion, so President Dwight D Eisenhower asked Congress for authorisation to use military force if requested by any Middle Eastern nation to check aggression. Eisenhower was also able to set aside $200 million to help Middle Eastern countries that desired aid from the United States in the face of such attacks. Known as the Eisenhower Doctrine, these acts would attempt to stem the tide of Soviet influence in the Middle East.

For the Russians, the Soviet threat to launch a nuclear assault against France and Britain was the key factor that forced the two nations to withdraw from Egypt. Supreme leader Nikita Khrushchev saw the move as a triumph for Soviet power in the political arena and confirmation that the West truly feared the USSR's nuclear capabilities. The Cold War, it seemed, was far from over...



President Dwight D Eisenhower

Gamal Abdel Nasser, pictured here on the left, saw his administration rise in popularity among other Arab states following the end of the Suez Crisis

В Колонном зале Дома Союзов 6 марта 1953 года. Руководит

THE DOCTORS' PLOT

Joseph Stalin's paranoia peaked in 1952 with the arrest of high-ranking Jewish doctors accused of being "spies and killers". What warped fate did the General Secretary have for these doctors, the Jewish population of Soviet Russia, and the USSR itself?

WORDS: BEN BIGGS

On 13 January 1953, the Soviet state news agency TASS pushed a major announcement through its extensive network: "Some time ago the agencies of state security uncovered a terrorist group of doctors who had made it their aim to cut short the lives of active public figures of the Soviet Union by means of sabotaged medical treatment."

The article named two targets of these 'terrorists', leading party members Andrei Zhdanov and Aleksandr Shcherbakov, both of whom were in poor health when they died, in 1948 and 1945 respectively, of natural causes. Apparently now "monsters in human form" were in truth responsible for murdering these comrades via deliberate misdiagnosis and that if it wasn't for their arrest, several prominent military figures on their hit list would have suffered a similar fate.

Nine doctors were arrested, all senior Soviet medics, one of which was Boris Shimeliovich, chief medical director of Botkin hospital and the man who was ultimately responsible for the health of Communist Party elites. Six of the doctors were Jewish, which TASS was swift to highlight: these doctors were allegedly in league with the Americans, specifically an organisation called 'Joint' (the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee), which had been formed in the United States to help Jews in other countries.

The arrests worried the Western powers even as the Cold War escalated, but the announcement terrified the Jewish population of the USSR and many of those in Stalin's own politburo. They were walking on eggshells. What was their increasingly paranoid and unpredictable leader plotting? The truth was more chilling than they could imagine.

...ли Партии и Правительства у гроба товарища И. В. Сталина.
...ссарионо... С...

Pravda, the official newspaper of the Soviet Communist Party, completely backtracked once Stalin died, announcing that the Doctors were, in fact, innocent

That anti-Semitism ran deep through the Communist Party of the USSR and its doctrine, was no secret. Stalin's fear of a 'fifth column' bringing the Soviet Union down from the inside and his retaliatory anti-Jewish pogroms are well documented. But this was the first time the Soviets had been so explicitly anti-Semitic. Perhaps not because of any personal discrimination though. Jewish or not, Stalin was equally happy to exploit the support of his most loyal members and, when the time came, leverage them to further his ambitions, which usually meant making them scapegoats. In his twisted mind, making enemies of Jewish Communist leaders was an obvious way to remove potential political opponents and unite his party in the face of the USSR's true enemy – America.

Paranoia and Machiavellian political strategy had also compelled Stalin to 'purge' his own party from time to time over the years. It began with the removal of many of Lenin's stalwart allies soon after the former Soviet leader had died, when Stalin had succeeded him. Senior party members Lev Kamenev, Grigory Zinoviev, Andrei Bubnov and Leon Trotsky were arrested and charged with conspiracy of one form or another, executed, imprisoned or assassinated, then replaced by those Stalin trusted at the time.

The latest purge, in late 1952, saw Communist parties across Europe shake up their own hierarchies, though at least in the democratic West, away from Stalin's sphere of influence, this only meant being removed from office. From behind the Iron Curtain, a worse fate awaited Rudolf Slansky, the former General Secretary of the Czechoslovakian Communist Party. Despite his abject deference to Stalin, Slansky was Jewish and had been arrested in November 1951, accused of collaborating with the West and attempting to undermine communism in Czechoslovakia. Along with 14 other Czech leaders, 11 of which were Jewish, Slansky was branded a 'Titoist', after

HANGOVER FROM HELL

Did the highest ranks of the Soviet regime at the time want their increasingly paranoid leader dead?

The night before he was found in the library of his Kuntsevo dacha, unconscious with his nightclothes drenched in urine, Stalin had been entertaining members of his politburo. When he was discovered the following morning doctors were not immediately summoned. In fact, it was nearly 24 hours later that physicians attended to him.

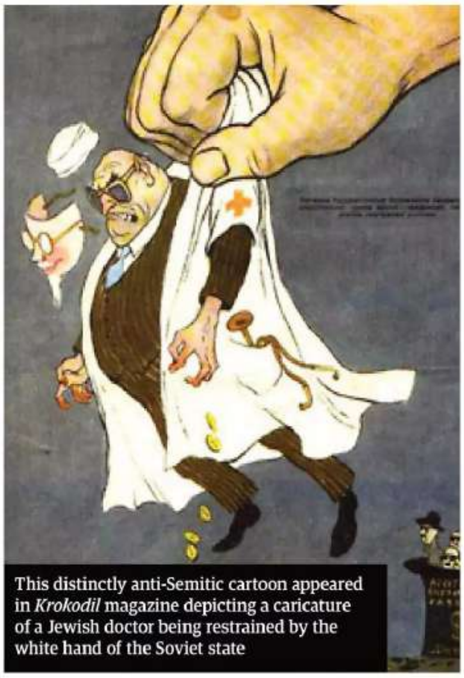
Khrushchev said that Stalin was "drunk and in high spirits the night before", and not even members of his inner circle dared stir Stalin from a drunken sleep, to avoid incurring the wrath of their hungover leader. But Stalin was known to prefer to remain relatively sober so that he could observe his drinking companions. His bodyguards also commented that Stalin wasn't drunk and he had been drinking fruit juice before his guests left. Fearing that they may fall under a cloud themselves and concerned with the increasing friction Stalin's extreme politics was causing with the West, it's easy to imagine his fellow cabinet members taking the opportunity to allow nature to solve this dilemma.

Yugoslavian Communist leader Josip Broz Tito, whose relative independence from the USSR made him a threat in Stalin's eyes.

Slansky's was the last and most brutal of the show trials. Having spent a year in prison being beaten and tortured, he was forced to confess to conspiring with Western Zionists. In the 1952 party congress, comrade Georgy Malenkov had already warned of "the infiltration of alien views, ideas and sentiments" and "vestiges of bourgeois ideology" in Soviet society, this only served to underline it. Stalin would make an example of these insurgents to the Communist leaders of any other satellite state. But it was very obvious at that time that the 'Jewish threat' implied in Malenkov's speech would not be left unchecked.

Stalin had already executed five notable members of the Jewish Anti-Fascist Committee, using the intelligence they gathered on the Nazis and the Holocaust against them ("Jewish bourgeois nationalism") but tried as they were in secret, he needed a more public piece of propaganda. He was in the thick of plotting the trial of the nine Soviet physicians by August, and in November they were arrested. Stalin had them put in chains and told their guards that if they did not obtain confessions about the doctors' links to foreign intelligence agencies and plots to assassinate leading figures in the Communist Party "We will shorten you by a head." Fearing for their lives, the jailers made a special torture chamber for their prisoners in Lefortovo to expedite their confessions.

The escalation from 'mere' beatings to more considered torture and interrogation quickly yielded the results Stalin sought. Physically and mentally broken, the doctors turned on each other. Stalin's personal physician Vladimir Vinogradov was among the first to admit to being a spy, a terrorist and that the other doctors were complicit in his plot. Former chief doctor of the Red Army Miron Vovsi, a man with some military background, put up token resistance before he crumbled, accusing the other eight of spying for the West. Vovsi was also forced to implicate his cousin, Jewish actor and director Solomon Mikhoels, who had been hunted down by a team of secret policemen dispatched from Moscow four years previously, then murdered in the most brutal fashion: crushed to death under a Studebaker (a popular American-made automobile) then left in street to be discovered as an unfortunate victim of a road accident.


This distinctly anti-Semitic cartoon appeared in *Krokodil* magazine depicting a caricature of a Jewish doctor being restrained by the white hand of the Soviet state

The doctors were also accused of murdering first secretary of the Moscow Regional Committee Aleksandr Shcherbakov

The confessions were exactly the fuel Stalin needed for the next stage of his propaganda machine. With anti-Semitism stirred in the Soviet Union, he took to a presidium meeting with his ministers on 1 December and told them, "Every Jew is a nationalist and an agent of American intelligence. Jewish nationalists believe that the USA saved their people. There you can become rich, bourgeois, and so forth. They believe that they are indebted to the Americans."

With Jews within the highest ranks of the Communist Party colluding with the West, was it not entirely plausible that other Soviet Jews who didn't benefit from such privileged positions would also spy for the Americans? Stalin's words and actions left his ministers and security chiefs with absolutely no doubt over how to pursue internal policies and investigations.

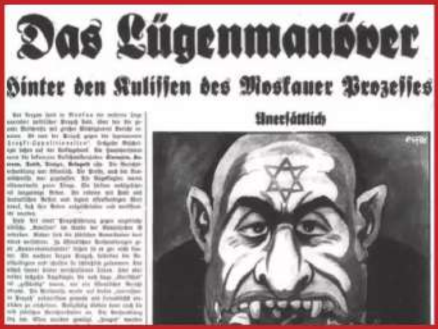
It was less than six weeks later, on 13 January 1953, that Stalin dropped the ideological facade and, in the words of dissident historian Roy Medvedev, "made anti-Semitism an open, obvious part of state policy." That morning, TASS made the

"EVERY JEW IS AN AGENT OF AMERICAN INTELLIGENCE. THEY BELIEVE THE USA SAVED THEIR PEOPLE AND THAT THEY ARE INDEBTED TO THE AMERICANS"

JOSEPH STALIN

UNITED IN HATE

Finding a scapegoat to blame for a country's economic woes, or to consolidate a nation against a ruler's political enemies, is a common and – unfortunately – effective tactic



Das Lügenmanöver

Hinter den Kuliſſen des Moskauer Prozeſſes

Unerſättlich

GERMANY

DATE: 1933 RULER: ADOLF HITLER

As soon as the Nazis took power Hitler began stoking anti-Semitism in Germany by encouraging the public to tell Jewish crime stories and publicising Jewish crime statistics. Perverse ideology aside, German Jews made a soft target for the Nazis to blame for the bitter loss of World War I, Germany's economic collapse and perceived moral 'degeneracy'.

RWANDA

DATE: 1994 RULER: JUVÉNAL HABYARIMANA

Decades of discrimination against ethnic Tutsis, encouraged by Rwanda's long-serving Hutu president, exploded in 100 days of killing following the death of Habyarimana, which saw tens of thousands of Tutsis hacked to death by machete-wielding Hutus. They were largely blamed for Rwanda's poverty, while the Hutu elite bled the country's bank account dry.

USA

DATE: 2017 RULER: DONALD TRUMP

On paper, illegal immigrants commit crime at a lower rate in the US than the rest of the country, but that didn't stop Trump from saying, "When Mexico sends its people… they're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists…" It was a sweeping generalisation that stigmatised an ethnic minority in the US, possibly designed to make himself more appealing to voters.

announcement of the doctors' plot: "Some time ago, the agencies of state security uncovered a terrorist group of doctors who made it their aim to cut short the lives of active public figures of the Soviet Union by means of sabotaged medical treatment." The 'murders' of the two Soviet leaders were then revealed and the article stitched together the elements of a widespread campaign the doctors had planned. Vovsi was apparently intent on eliminating "leading cadres of the USSR" and was in league with Solomon Mikhoels and chief medical doctor Boris Shimeliovich.

What wasn't mentioned or widely known outside the politburo was that Shimeliovich had been executed in Lefortovo prison in August 1952, having steadfastly refused to admit to any crime despite being tortured. Both Mikhoels and Shimeliovich – two dead men with zero chance of defending themselves – were accused of being treacherous bourgeois Zionists. The article then signed off with a chilling statement: "The investigation will soon be concluded."

The party line was coupled with an editorial from the official newspaper of the Soviet Communist Party, *Pravda*. It echoed the inflammatory articles of the official Nazi party newspaper, *Völkischer Beobachter*, which had ceased publication less than a decade before. "Foul spies and murderers in the mask of doctors and professors," proclaimed the headline, "Who did these monsters serve? Who directed the criminal terrorist and wrecking activity of these vile traitors to the motherland? What purpose did they want to achieve through murders of active public figures of the Soviet state?" Panic-stricken readers did not have to guess: *Pravda* pointed the finger firmly at the USA and the UK, accusing them of spying, of warmongering, and of "trying to succeed where the Hitlerites failed".

Stalin's Machiavellian masterstroke was then to turn this attack on the upper echelons of his cabinet in preparation for another dreaded purge. What incompetence led his state security to miss this 'fifth column' of subversives under their noses? They had "lost their vigilance and were infected with gullibility". Maybe they were complicit in the Jewish conspiracy? It put Lavrentiy Beria, as internal security minister, in the firing line. As a minister who was gradually falling out of Stalin's favour, Beria must have begun to fear his life, let alone his career.

Western newspapers did not recoil from criticism or suspicion. *The New York Times* called it out: "Soviet anti-Semitism – taking one more leaf out of Hitler's book the Stalin regime has now openly and unmistakably adopted anti-Semitism as a weapon in its own internal dissensions and as an instrument of both Communist tyranny and Soviet imperialism." London's *The Times* newspaper called the story "lurid and fantastic", while France's *Le Figaro* played devil's advocate by making the supposition that the doctors' confessions were true, then asking "What must be thought about a country where the greatest doctors assassinate leading state officials? Where men of science are made to publicly declare their humiliation and where the population will be prepared to accept the truth of their confessions, which are as disgraceful for the judge as they are for the accused."

But Stalin's propaganda machine was only beginning to crank into action. Over the next six weeks Soviet Jews were subjected to a daily torrent of hateful accusations in the Communist media that went far beyond slander. Not only were their loyalties to the USSR called into question but their qualifications as doctors, by Soviet medical journals. As the state made the path clear for anyone to publish articles laden with anti-Semitism, *Krokodil* magazine targeted the new enemy of the state with a fresh article that lumped the 'Zionists' in with the Western powers and Hitler's vengeful generals. This was followed by a cartoon strip featuring a grotesque caricature of a Jewish doctor.

Anti-Semitism spread like wildfire across the country as many began to suspect doctors of trying to kill them, leading to patients refusing to be prescribed medicine or treatment. It even took hold abroad within Communist parties in other countries like France, where the French Communist Party requested help from the USSR in unmasking its own conspirators. But though Stalin had poisoned the public against the imprisoned doctors, Soviet Jews, and some of the leading political figures in Moscow, fate was about to provide the antidote.

Stalin was not a well man. His health had been deteriorating for years and his habit of ensuring his pipe was permanently packed with tobacco

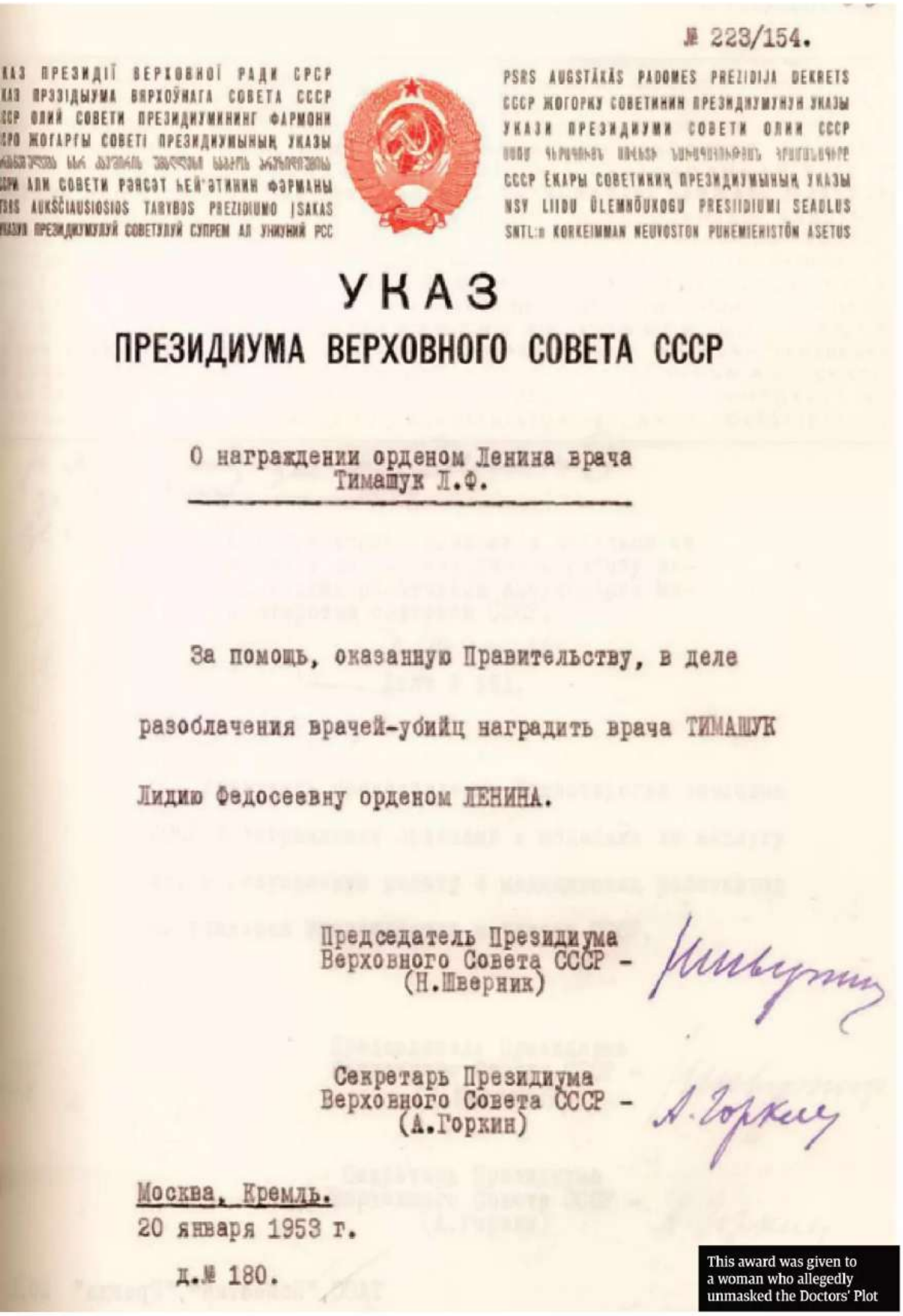
Lefortovo Prison in Moscow, where the accused doctors were held and tortured before being freed

had not improved it. A lifelong chain-smoker, he finally quit in early 1952, though the damage to his heart and lungs had been done by then. He'd suffered from aches and pains in his limbs since his fifties, plus headaches and pains in his throat. He had some trouble walking and standing, and doctors had been treating him for arteriosclerosis (hardening of the arteries) since 1936. That did not jibe with the unspoken party line that Stalin wasn't just in relatively rude health for his age but he was almost superhuman, unaffected by the ravages of old age. By 1950 he had suffered from a series of small strokes and heart attacks, and the health of the General Secretary of the USSR had become a hot topic of international news agencies.

On the evening of Saturday 28 February 1953 Stalin summoned some of his most senior staff to watch a film with him in Moscow. Despite the lack of trust he invariably had in members of his own political party, Stalin was a very social man who couldn't bear his own company. Malenkov, Beria, Khrushchev and Nikolai Bulganin (the new minister of defence) then went to Stalin's dacha for dinner. It was nearly dawn when they retired.

By noon on 1 March Stalin hadn't ordered breakfast from the kitchens as expected. The guards were ordered not to invade the General Secretary's privacy unless ordered. By 10pm they were so worried that they sent one of the maids who had worked at the dacha for years up to his room with a packet of documents that had arrived that day for Stalin to sign. She found him there in

"WHILE STALIN WAS DYING, THE IMPRISONED DOCTORS EXPERIENCED A CHANGE IN THEIR CAPTORS' TONE AS THEY WERE ASKED FOR THEIR MEDICAL OPINIONS, AND WHETHER THEY COULD RECOMMEND DOCTORS"



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КАЗ ПРЕЗИДІЇ ВЕРХОВНОЇ РАДИ СРСР
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СР ОЛИЙ СОВЕТИ ПРЕЗИДИУМИНИНГ ФАРМОНИ
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УКАЗ
ПРЕЗИДИУМА ВЕРХОВНОГО СОВЕТА СССР

О награждении орденом Ленина врача
Тимашук Л.Ф.

За помощь, оказанную Правительству, в деле разоблачения врачей-убийц наградить врача ТИМАШУК Лидию Федосеевну орденом ЛЕНИНА.

Председатель Президиума
Верховного Совета СССР -
(Н.Шверник)

Секретарь Президиума
Верховного Совета СССР -
(А.Горкин) А. Горкин

Москва, Кремль.
20 января 1953 г.

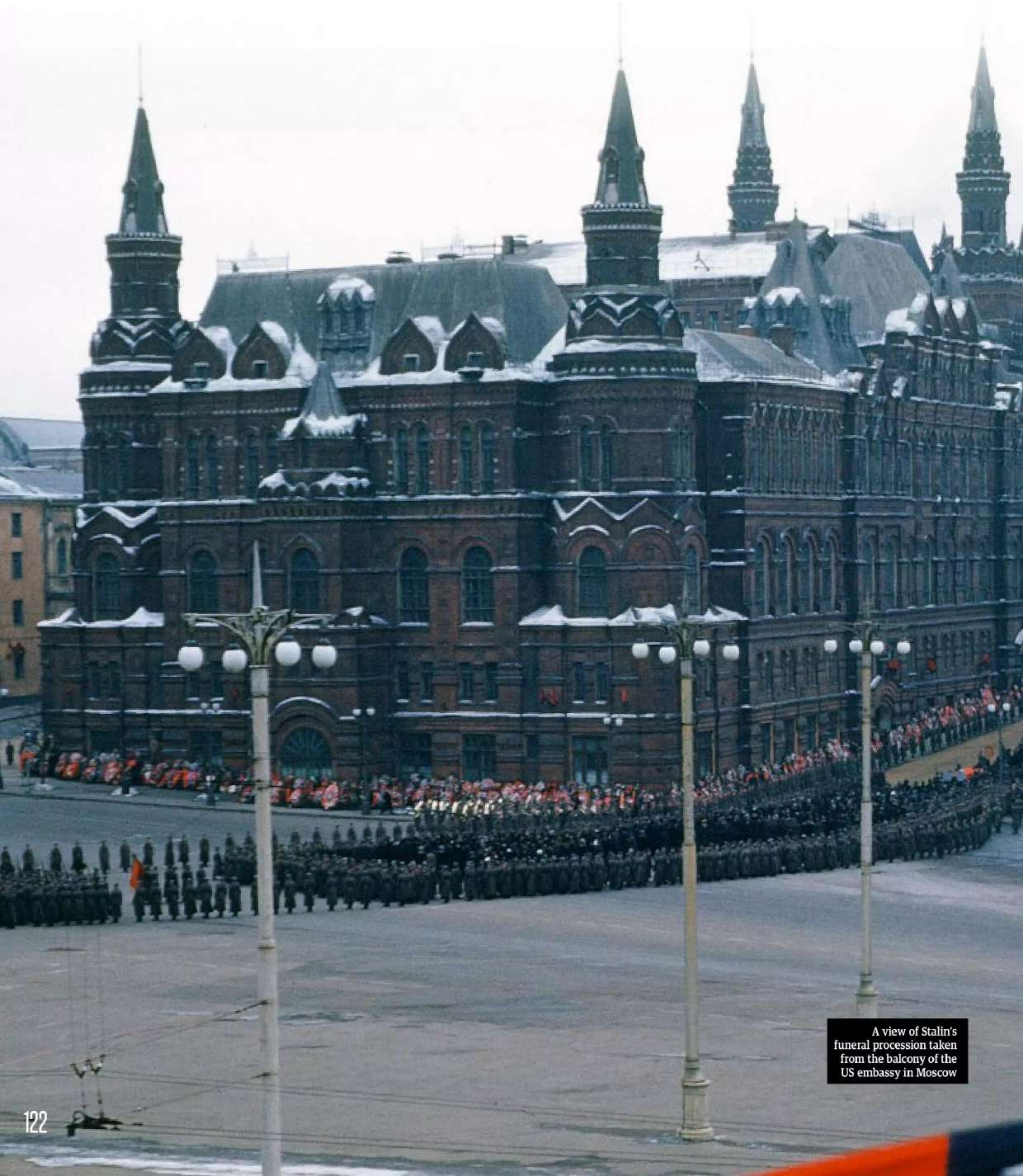
д.№ 180.

This award was given to a woman who allegedly unmasked the Doctors' Plot

his nightclothes, in an awkward heap in the library, barely conscious and making unintelligible buzzing sounds. Ever wary of Stalin's wrath and conscious that he had refused to see a doctor for over a year, it was nearly eight hours before anyone called for medical assistance. The doctors who attended were not, of course, Jewish. Either way, no measure of cold compresses or milk of magnesia enemas were going to save Stalin.

By the following Tuesday the doctors were letting nature take its course. Malenkov told them that he hoped they could extend his life for a "sufficient" amount of time, even if they could not save it. Ever the pragmatist, by that it was thought that Malenkov wanted to hold off the public announcement of Stalin's death until they had time to reorganise the party and prepare the public. Ironically, while Stalin was dying, the imprisoned doctors experienced a sudden change in their captors' tone as they were asked for their medical opinions and whether they could recommend doctors themselves. Pathologist Yakov Rapoport then gave them the names of nine highly regarded physicians - every one had been imprisoned. On 4 March 1953, Radio Moscow announced that Stalin had suffered a severe stroke that had paralysed him on one side and had barely left his heart and lungs in a functional condition. He could not speak, neither was he conscious, and he would have to be withdrawn from matters of state. After that, Stalin's condition rapidly deteriorated, and the following evening he died. There was no immediate change in Moscow; it was almost as if his cabinet was worried Stalin would rise from his deathbed and smite the first person who dared to show a glimmer of ambition. But there was a collective sigh of relief. It was a few weeks before the new first deputy premier, Lavrentiy Beria (who must have felt he'd been dicing with death himself), could conduct a formal investigation, exonerate and release the men, then publicise their innocence via the very same newspaper that had set about destroying their character just a few months before.

It was a truly startling piece of editorial for *Pravda* readers, a complete U-turn that stated the doctors' plot was in fact a complete fabrication designed to incite hatred against the Jews. The nightmare was over for these medical men - but it would be decades before Russian people saw the end to theirs.



A view of Stalin's funeral procession taken from the balcony of the US embassy in Moscow

THE DEATH OF STALIN

Stalin's death sent shockwaves around the world, triggering public demonstrations of grief - and muted celebrations - in the Soviet Union

From a vantage point overlooking central Moscow, on a cold day in 1953, a US military attaché named Martin Manhoff managed to capture the only known independent images of Joseph Stalin's state funeral. Discovered by chance in 2016, after Manhoff's death, this 16mm film footage of the solemn ceremony is unlike other images officially released from Moscow, offering a unique unfiltered view of one of the most pivotal moments in Soviet history at a time when the eyes of the world were looking closely for indication as to which of Stalin's acolytes would take over.

The soldiers on Manezhnaya Square can be seen gathered along the route of Stalin's last mile, impatiently waiting for the funeral procession to arrive, shaking their boots and pacing around to keep warm. A row of cars, the kind favoured by Politburo members, sits awkwardly next to the walls of the snow-capped Kremlin. Seven black horses eventually arrive, drawing the Soviet leader's casket in the direction of the State Historical Museum - Stalin's face, rigid and pale, visible through a window installed in the top of the coffin.

Manhoff's footage of these early moments of the ceremony show a much less composed version of what would later unfold when Stalin's coffin reached its final destination at Lenin's Mausoleum, where the former leader would remain in state until 1961. Following the announcement of premier's death on 6 March, the Soviet press and new leadership sought to present a nation united. But beyond the show of military power and dutiful lamentation, this tectonic shift in the direction of the country would trigger a new round of serpentine scheming - the kind that had become the hallmark of Soviet politics.

"THIS TECTONIC SHIFT IN THE DIRECTION OF THE COUNTRY WOULD TRIGGER A NEW ROUND OF SERPENTINE SCHEMING - THE KIND THAT HAD BECOME THE HALLMARK OF SOVIET POLITICS"

Like an emperor with an ineradicable fear of loneliness, Stalin would often summon his closest associates for company. The evening of 28 February 1953, was no different, as the Soviet leader gathered the quartet of his inner circle who had thus far survived his trademark purges - Georgi Malenkov, Nikolai Bulganin, Lavrentiy Beria and Nikita Khrushchev - at the Kremlin to watch a movie. His love of American cinema, despite speaking little English, was no secret among his comrades in arms. As supreme censor of the Soviet film industry, he would frequently organise private screenings of foreign movies, without subtitles or dubbing - his minister of cinema, Ivan Bolshakov, was tasked with providing improvised commentary. Soviet filmmaker Grigori Kozintsev would note: "Stalin didn't watch movies as works of art, he watched them as though they were real events taking place before his eyes." The name of the last film Stalin saw is a detail lost in the fog of the unusual series of events that would follow as his personal story reached its dramatic end.

Leaving the Kremlin on that fateful Saturday night, the four Politburo members drove out to join Stalin for dinner at his dacha - codenamed Blizny (the nearby one) - in the Moscow suburb of Kuntsevo. As usual, this extended into a long

Khrushchev, Beria and Malenkov at Stalin's funeral on 9 March 1953

bout of drinking that lasted into the early hours of the morning. The modestly appointed country house was Stalin's favoured retreat and in the final years of his life he spent much of his free time there, sitting on the open veranda in traditional Russian winter clothing, stretched out on a board above the oven in the hope of controlling his bouts of radiculitis (nerve inflammation), or cutting out pictures from magazines to hang on the walls. Despite his preference for the Blizny dacha, a light in his Kremlin office would always be kept on at night, the cult of personality built around the Soviet leader demanding that he remain ever vigilant and always working on behalf of the Soviet people.

Stalin's health had deteriorated rapidly in his twilight years. Following the end of World War II he grew to suffer from dull pains in his muscles and nerve ends. In early 1952, he would dispense with his trademark pipe to try to deal with hypertension. Rumours of Stalin's ill health were widespread in the West, although the last foreign visitors to see him in 1952 - the Indian and Argentine ambassadors - commented on his excellent mind, health and spirit. To the Soviet people, however, the 'Man of Steel' would be portrayed as too determined in his task to succumb to illness.

As the visiting Politburo members departed into the Moscow morning around 5am, Stalin retired to his room. It was often his habit when at the Blizny dacha to sleep late, especially following heavy drinking the night before. The guards and household staff on call were under strict orders not to disturb the Soviet leader without invitation - in fact, Stalin had taken to sleeping in different rooms in the villa to thwart any would-be assassin. But by early evening, the guards had become suspicious.

They were unnerved when the Soviet leader still hadn't appeared to ask for tea or breakfast. Finding pretext to enter Stalin's room, the guards conscripted either the elderly maid, Matryona Petrovna, or the deputy commissar for the dacha, Pyotr Lozgachev, with the task of delivering a packet of official mail to the Soviet leader at around 10pm. Accounts vary on some details but what is commonly agreed is that Stalin was discovered lying on the floor, drenched in urine and incapable of moving. With the help of his guards, he was transferred to a nearby sofa, unable to speak except for a strange buzzing sound.

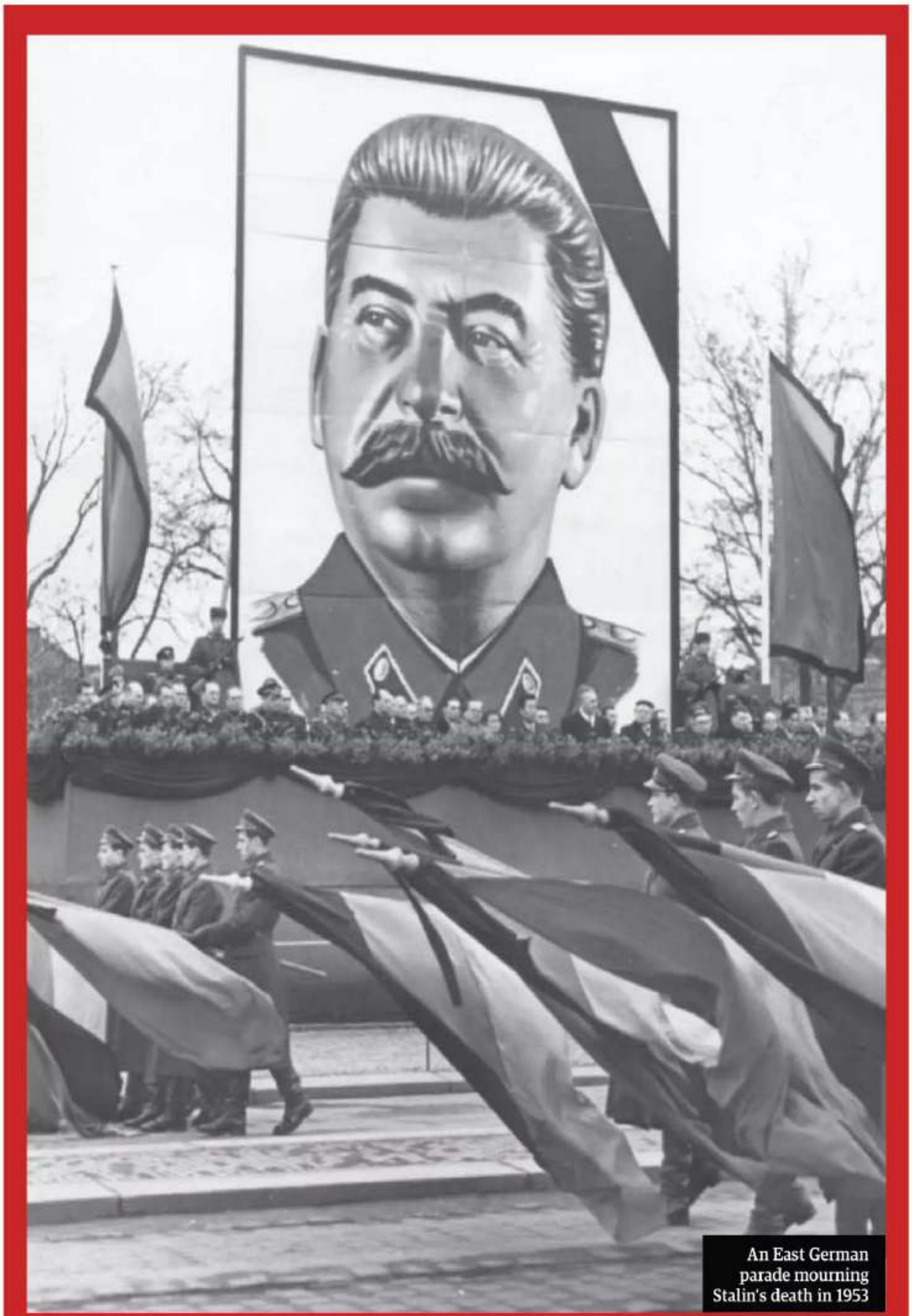
Uncertain as to the procedure to follow, the guards contacted their superior - the minister of state security, Semyon Ignatiev - who directed them to call Malenkov or Beria. Although they got through to Malenkov, Beria would be harder to find. Eventually, they both arrived at the dacha - Khrushchev's memoirs would also place him at the scene, although this is disputed - only to conclude that the Soviet leader was merely sleeping and that he should be left undisturbed.

By this time, Stalin appeared to be snoring, although it is unlikely that the Politburo members present were convinced of their own claim that he was merely sleeping. Perhaps like the guards they feared the consequences of disturbing him. More likely is that Stalin's comrades-in-arms had begun

France-soir
STALINE MOURANT

STALINE
France
STALINE

French newspapers report that Stalin is dying, 5 March 1953



An East German parade mourning Stalin's death in 1953

THE INTERNATIONAL REACTION

How was the death of the Father of Nations received outside the Soviet Union?

The international reaction to the Red Tsar's passing varied but often represented some moral confusion, especially in the West. The *New York Times*, for instance, called the former Soviet leader "Genghis Khan with a telephone" while *The Times* of London published a fawning obituary, excusing Stalin's purges and show trials as having gone farther than he had intended.

The flag of the United Nations was lowered to half-mast the day of his death and funeral, and for the first time since its country's independence, the Indian parliament adjourned in memory of a foreign leader. The Vatican even called for Catholics to pray for Stalin's soul.

Reactions in Eastern Europe were more dramatic, with 400,000 people attending a parallel funeral in Bucharest. "Excessive alcoholic celebrations" could not be suppressed by the government in Poland. In East Berlin, Stalin's statue was surrounded with wreaths and mourners, while in the west of the city newspaper sellers could be heard shouting: "Stalin responds to the cry of the people – he dies!" The reaction in Israel, in light of the Soviet Doctors Trials, was tempered by a strange coincidence. Stalin had fallen ill on 1 March, the date of Purim when the Jews of the Persian Empire were saved from royal vizier Hamam's intention to annihilate them.

An official photo of Stalin's coffin and funeral procession on 9 March 1953

plotting their own ascendency in the hope of the leader's imminent demise.

What is clear is that it would be more than 24 hours after whatever led to Stalin's debilitated state that medical assistance would arrive. The generalissimo's inner circle preferred to establish a regimen whereby different pairs of Politburo members would watch over him throughout the night. Over the previous years, the Soviet leader had developed a pathological fear of medical professionals, culminating in the exposure of an alleged conspiracy of mainly Jewish physicians plotting against Kremlin officials. Stalin had arrested many of the doctors who had been looking after his health for years. His life would now lay in the hands of a team of unknown physicians.

When this hastily assembled group of medical professionals eventually arrived to diagnose Stalin's condition, they were faced with the uncomfortable task of admitting that he was in a state beyond their capacity to successfully treat. Stalin's liver was severely enlarged and his right elbow appeared bruised and swollen from a fall. But, more worryingly, when examining his eyes, they found Stalin's eyeballs would dart from left to right, unable to focus. Some serious malady had obviously befallen the so-called Father of Nations.

WAS STALIN MURDERED?

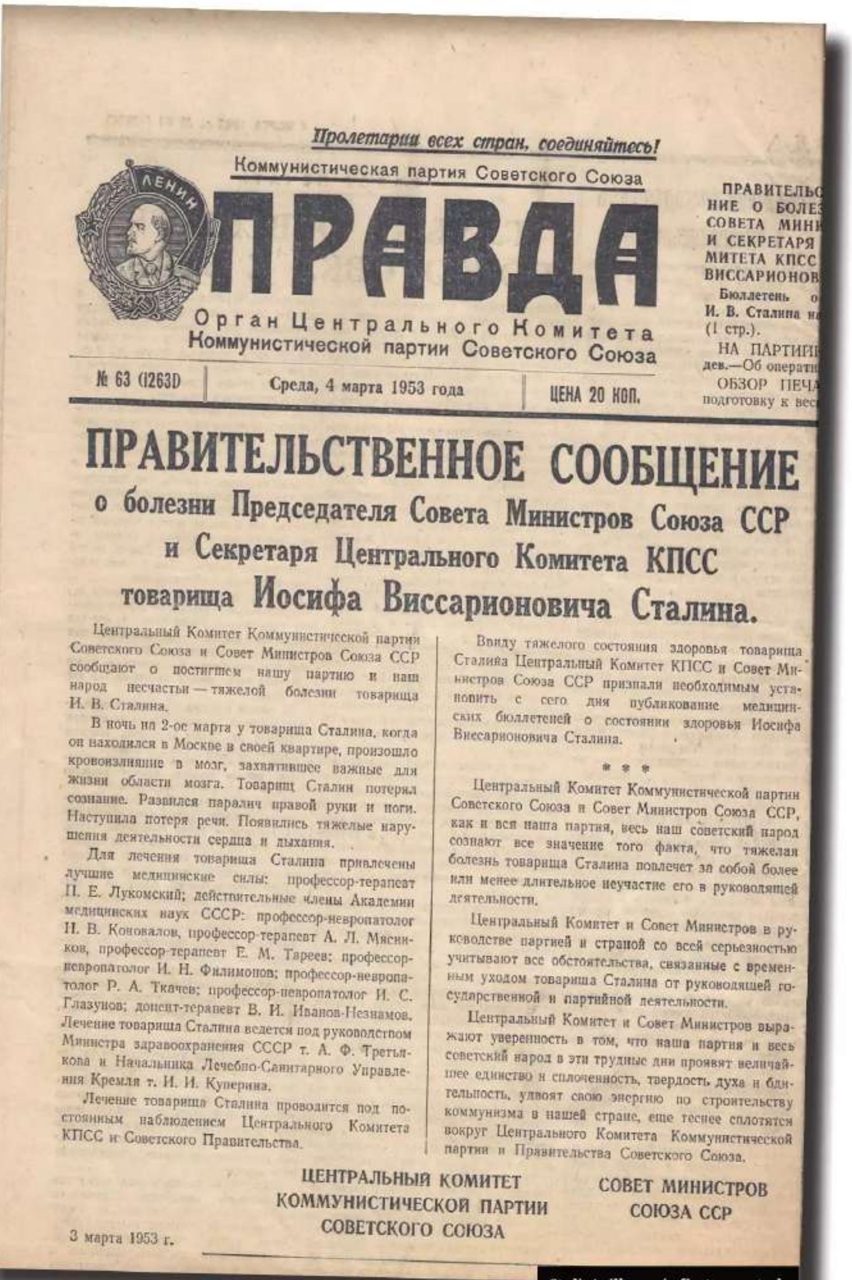
Did secret police chief Lavrentiy Beria play a role in speeding up the Red Tsar's departure?

Whether Stalin's long sleep, beginning on 1 March, may have been assisted by one of the members of his entourage is still open for debate. Lavrentiy Beria, the chief of the secret police, is often cited as the most popular pretender for the role of assassin. According to Molotov, he even boasted that he had been responsible for killing Stalin on May Day 1953, less than two months after the leader's death.

One scenario sees Beria slipping warfarin, a tasteless and transparent poison, into Stalin's Georgian wine during their final dinner, perhaps acting in cahoots with Khrushchev. Another, that after Stalin's fall, and before the arrival of the doctors, Beria took the opportunity to poison a glass of water, administering the concoction to the Soviet leader in his incapacitated state.

With Stalin's well-known appetite for conjuring enemies and subsequently annihilating them, it is highly understandable that he may have acquired some very real enemies of his own along the way. However, if proof of such an undertaking ever existed it has most certainly been destroyed along with Beria. A cerebral haemorrhage remains the most straightforward explanation for Stalin's death, the idea of the Soviet leader's poisoning now merely a matter of speculation.

Lavrentiy Beria, head of the Soviet secret police



Пролетарии всех стран, соединяйтесь!

Коммунистическая партия Советского Союза

ПРАВДА

Орган Центрального Комитета
Коммунистической партии Советского Союза

№ 63 (12631) | Среда, 4 марта 1953 года | ЦЕНА 20 КОП.

ПРАВИТЕЛЬС
НИЕ О БОЛЕЗ
СОВЕТА МИНИ
И СЕКРЕТАРЯ
МИТЕТА КПСС
ВИССАРИОНОВ

Бюллетень о
И. В. Сталина н
(1 стр.).

НА ПАРТИЙН
дев.—Об операти

ОБЗОР ПЕЧА
подготовку к вес

ПРАВИТЕЛЬСТВЕННОЕ СООБЩЕНИЕ

о болезни Председателя Совета Министров Союза ССР и Секретаря Центрального Комитета КПСС товарища Иосифа Виссарионовича Сталина.

Центральный Комитет Коммунистической партии Советского Союза и Совет Министров Союза ССР сообщают о постигшем нашу партию и наш народ несчастьи — тяжелой болезни товарища И. В. Сталина.

В ночь на 2-ое марта у товарища Сталина, когда он находился в Москве в своей квартире, произошло кровоизлияние в мозг, захватившее важные для жизни области мозга. Товарищ Сталин потерял сознание. Развился паралич правой руки и ноги. Наступила потеря речи. Появились тяжелые нарушения деятельности сердца и дыхания.

Для лечения товарища Сталина привлечены лучшие медицинские силы: профессор-терапевт П. Е. Лукомский; действительные члены Академии медицинских наук СССР: профессор-невропатолог Н. В. Коновалов, профессор-терапевт А. Л. Мясников, профессор-терапевт Е. М. Тареев; профессор-невропатолог И. Н. Филимонов; профессор-невропатолог Р. А. Ткачев; профессор-невропатолог И. С. Глазунов; доцент-терапевт В. И. Иванов-Незнамов. Лечение товарища Сталина ведется под руководством Министра здравоохранения СССР т. А. Ф. Третьякова и Начальника Лечебно-Санитарного Управления Кремля т. И. И. Куперина.

Лечение товарища Сталина проводится под постоянным наблюдением Центрального Комитета КПСС и Советского Правительства.

Ввиду тяжелого состояния здоровья товарища Сталина Центральный Комитет КПСС и Совет Министров Союза ССР признали необходимым установить с сего дня публикование медицинских бюллетеней о состоянии здоровья Иосифа Виссарионовича Сталина.

* * *

Центральный Комитет Коммунистической партии Советского Союза и Совет Министров Союза ССР, как и вся наша партия, весь наш советский народ сознают все значение того факта, что тяжелая болезнь товарища Сталина повлечет за собой более или менее длительное неучастие его в руководящей деятельности.

Центральный Комитет и Совет Министров в руководстве партией и страной со всей серьезностью учитывают все обстоятельства, связанные с временным уходом товарища Сталина от руководящей государственной и партийной деятельности.

Центральный Комитет и Совет Министров выражают уверенность в том, что наша партия и весь советский народ в эти трудные дни проявят величайшее единство и сплоченность, твердость духа и бдительность, удвоят свою энергию по строительству коммунизма в нашей стране, еще теснее сплотятся вокруг Центрального Комитета Коммунистической партии и Правительства Советского Союза.

ЦЕНТРАЛЬНЫЙ КОМИТЕТ
КОММУНИСТИЧЕСКОЙ ПАРТИИ
СОВЕТСКОГО СОЮЗА

СОВЕТ МИНИСТРОВ
СОЮЗА ССР

3 марта 1953 г.

Stalin's illness is first reported in *Pravda* on 4 March 1953

Mourners gather in Red Square for Stalin's funeral on 6 March 1953

One of the doctors concluded Stalin had suffered a heart attack, although others suspected a cerebral haemorrhage. The immediate recommendation: "Absolute quiet; the application of eight medical leeches to his ears; a cold compress on his head; an enema of milk of magnesia; and the removal of his false teeth."

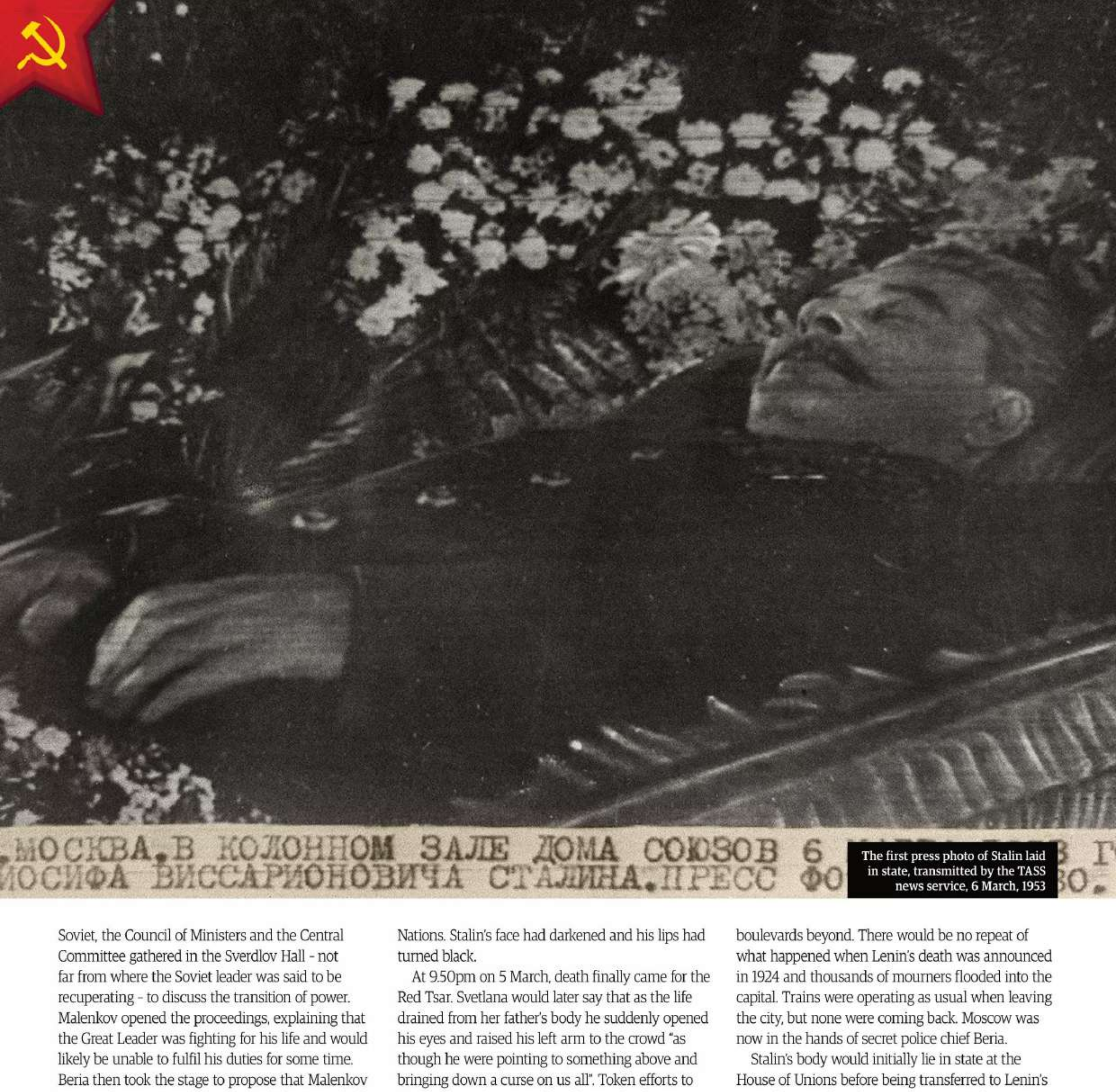
Stalin's legitimate children, Svetlana and Vasily, soon arrived to find the normally quiet dacha thick with an air of anxious uncertainty. Vasily, known for his drinking, began shouting that the doctors were killing his father. Svetlana chose to sit by her father's side, holding his hand and kissing his forehead. Asked for a prognosis on 3 March, the physicians concluded that "death was inevitable".

What seemed natural in the case of the millions of statistical deaths Stalin had induced appeared an impossible tragedy when considering the indomitable Man of Steel. Their suspicions of Stalin's impending demise confirmed, the Politburo members present would now face the task of organising a new government and managing public opinion to ensure a clear transition of power.

Stalin's condition was first revealed to the world in an announcement from the Soviet government, released over the official Tass news agency and broadcast on Radio Moscow. Stalin was in a "grave state of health" but under "the constant supervision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party". A cerebral haemorrhage had caused loss of speech and consciousness as the leader had been working dutifully in his office. No mention was made of the dacha in Kuntsevo. The medical bulletin was signed by nine doctors and the minister of health. The doctors would treat Stalin, while the party leaders monitored the doctors and, as the bulletin confirmed, none of the physicians would be Jewish.

As the deathwatch continued with the eyes, and ears, of the world now paying attention, Stalin's condition worsened. The doctors continued to inject penicillin, caffeine and camphor, apply leeches to Stalin's neck and back, and administer "nutritional enemas" of cream and egg yolk. On 4 March, he began vomiting blood and his pulse weakened. The results of an electrocardiogram showed lesions on the back of his heart and disturbances in the blood pressure of his coronary arteries.

With the world convinced that Stalin was being treated in the Kremlin, members of the Supreme


.МОСКВА.В КОЛОННОМ ЗАЛЕ ДОМА СОЮЗОВ 6
ИОСИФА ВИССАРИОНОВИЧА СТАЛИНА.ПРЕСС ФО

The first press photo of Stalin laid in state, transmitted by the TASS news service, 6 March, 1953

Soviet, the Council of Ministers and the Central Committee gathered in the Sverdlov Hall - not far from where the Soviet leader was said to be recuperating - to discuss the transition of power. Malenkov opened the proceedings, explaining that the Great Leader was fighting for his life and would likely be unable to fulfil his duties for some time. Beria then took the stage to propose that Malenkov assume the position of chairman of the Council of Ministers, the de facto leader of the Soviet Union, and the idea received the support of the chamber.

Malenkov was the only man other than Stalin who was a member of all three of the highest bodies of the party and government - the Politburo, the Secretariat and the Collegium of the Council of Ministers. On paper, he was the obvious replacement. In reality, however, he lacked the skills to ensure the continuity of his leadership. Returning to the Blizny dacha, the new leadership joined Stalin's daughter Svetlana for the final moments of the Father of Nations. Stalin's face had darkened and his lips had turned black.

"THE NEW LEADERSHIP JOINED STALIN'S DAUGHTER SVETLANA FOR THE FINAL MOMENTS OF THE FATHER OF NATIONS. STALIN'S FACE HAD DARKENED AND HIS LIPS TURNED BLACK"

At 9.50pm on 5 March, death finally came for the Red Tsar. Svetlana would later say that as the life drained from her father's body he suddenly opened his eyes and raised his left arm to the crowd "as though he were pointing to something above and bringing down a curse on us all". Token efforts to resuscitate Stalin proved fruitless and at dawn on Friday 6 March his body was taken from the dacha so that an autopsy could be performed. Six hours and ten minutes later, the Kremlin flag was lowered and the news of the Soviet leader's death was broadcast to the world. Three days and three nights of official mourning would follow before Stalin's state funeral in the Russian capital.

Central Moscow soon fell under control of the Ministry of the Interior with blue-and-red capped special troops securing the whole inner ring - the 'white stone city' - and the 'garden ring' of boulevards beyond. There would be no repeat of what happened when Lenin's death was announced in 1924 and thousands of mourners flooded into the capital. Trains were operating as usual when leaving the city, but none were coming back. Moscow was now in the hands of secret police chief Beria.

Stalin's body would initially lie in state at the House of Unions before being transferred to Lenin's Mausoleum a short distance away in Red Square in an elaborately staged funeral procession. The opulent Pillar Hall inside the House of Unions had previously hosted the notorious show trials of the 1930s when Kamenev, Zinoviev and Bukharin were publicly paraded before their executions, and it had held Lenin's body before his internment. Whether hero or traitor of the Soviet state, all would ultimately make their way through the Pillar Hall.

The funeral began at 10am on Monday 9 March as pallbearers carried Stalin's coffin out of the House of Unions with Malenkov and Beria present, alongside seven other members of the Soviet leadership and Chinese premier Zhou Enlai. Placed on an artillery carriage, the casket was followed by a procession of mourners, with officials from Eastern Europe like East German leader Walter Ulbricht in attendance. Despite an invitation, the United States chose against flying in any dignitaries from Washington.

Once the coffin had reached the Kremlin Necropolis, it was placed on display in front of Lenin's tomb. Khrushchev, as head of the commission for the funeral, introduced Malenkov, who delivered the first eulogy, followed by Beria and Vyacheslav Molotov. As Malenkov evangelised about Russia's future, Beria spoke simply of maintaining order, while only Molotov - who had recently been excluded from Stalin's inner circle, and whose wife had fallen victim to Stalin's sweeping terror - showed any sign of personal anguish.

According to Molotov, Stalin had been "a close friend and our own infinitely dear man". Molotov, known for his uninspiring speeches and cold delivery, would come across as the most human of the three, perhaps moved by the knowledge that destiny had narrowly saved him from the same fate as many before him who had fallen out of the Red Tsar's favour.

The speakers climbed down from the mausoleum and a minute of silence was observed. As the clock struck noon, the salute guns of the Kremlin fired 20 salvos and the factory whistles of Moscow sounded. All over Russia, every train, bus, tram, truck and car halted. 30 minutes later, the guns fell silent and the former Soviet leader was carried into Lenin's tomb.

It would take months before the embalming process of Stalin's body would be finished and the mausoleum hall redesigned to allow visitors to line up and pay their respects. Finally, on 17 November 1953, Stalin re-appeared to the world, lying in state next to the man who on his deathbed had denounced him and called for his removal from the position of general secretary. At this point, much had changed in the leadership of the Soviet state.

The funeral ceremony presented the Soviet leadership to the world as a triumvirate: Malenkov, Beria and Molotov. Although Malenkov was appointed chairman of the Council of Ministers on the day of Stalin's death, he would not be accorded Stalin's title of general secretary. He was released from his duties of Secretary of the Central Committee at a meeting on 14 March. Soon he would speak out against the deification of his predecessor and the need to "stop the policy of the cult of personality and go to the collective leadership of the country".

One month before Stalin's body had been put on public display, Khrushchev had assumed supreme leadership of the party as first secretary, creating a Malenkov-Khrushchev duumvirate that would last until Khrushchev succeeded him as de facto Soviet leader on 8 February 1955. Of the quartet that partook in Stalin's last supper, three would survive to form the core leadership following the premier's death in 1953, with Bulganin taking over from Malenkov two years later in 1955 as leader of the Soviet Union.

The fourth disciple, Beria, would meet a violent end in December 1953 as a victim of the machinations of his fellow Politburo members. Accused of counter-revolutionary activities and treason, he was sentenced to death following a special session of the Supreme Court of the Soviet Union. The first to kiss Stalin's lifeless corpse on his deathbed, Beria would become the first symbolic casualty of de-Stalinisation - one more offering to the meat grinder of revolutionary progress. Left pleading for his life, he was executed by being shot through the forehead by General Pavel Batitsky, who had placed a rag into the fallen secret police chief's mouth to muffle his cries. Beria was turned into a sacrificial lamb as the new leadership sought to publicly cleanse its sins.

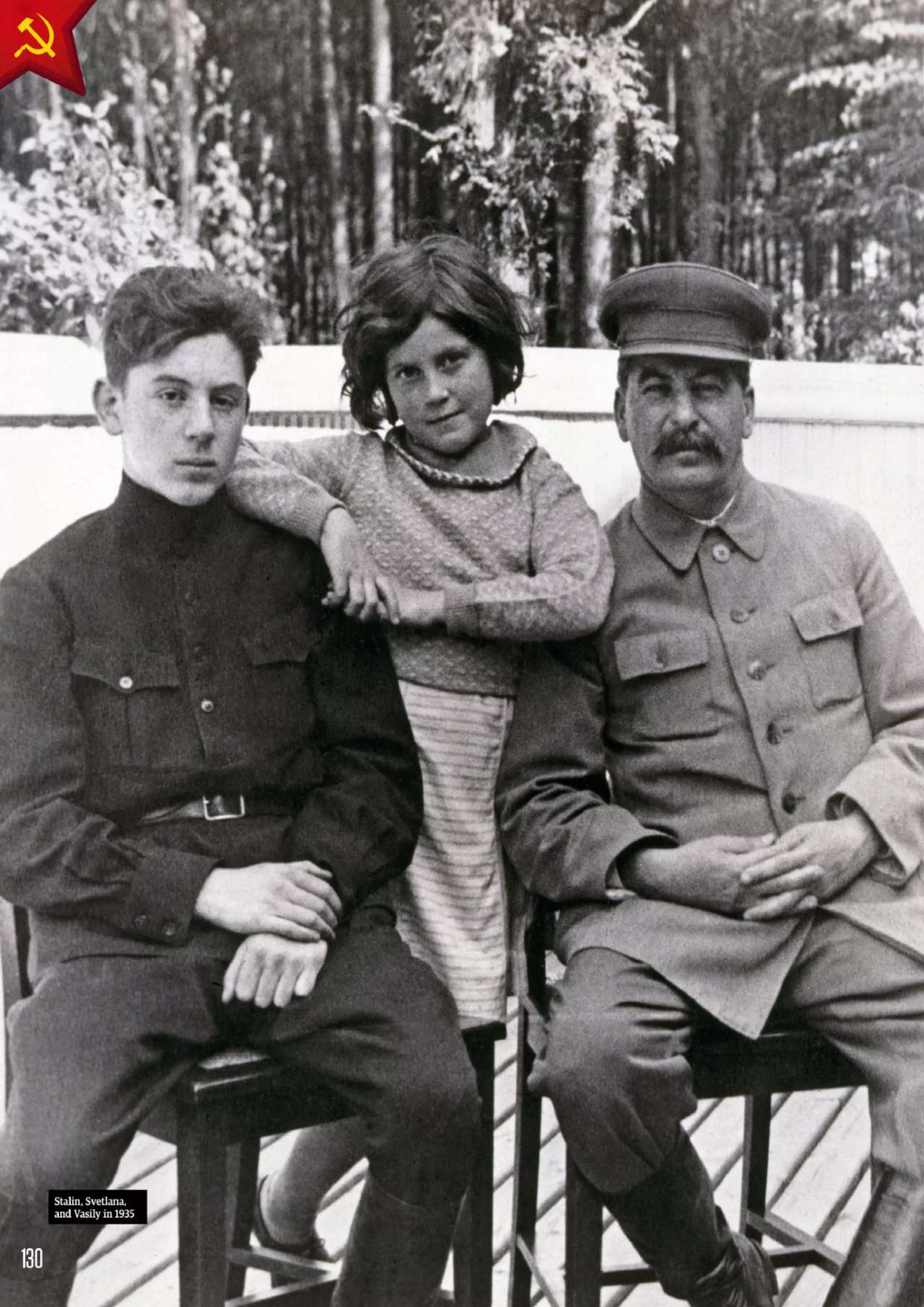
A monument to Stalin in front of the Kremlin Wall in Moscow

Stalin's funeral procession entering Manezhnaya Square, from the Manhoff Archive

De-Stalinisation is often seen to have started under Krushchev's rule in 1956 but this isn't the case. It was actually Malenkov's early criticism of the cult of personality and the removal of Beria - the recognisable face of Stalinist excesses - that inevitably laid the groundwork for the movement away from the generalissimo's murderous paranoid orthodoxy. In order to distance themselves from the crimes of the tyrant, however, the future leadership would have to be recast as accommodating servants rather than willing accomplices. By doing this, the men inadvertently strengthened the legend of the autocratic and irreplaceable Red Tsar.

Stalin the man may have died, but Stalin's vision would not expire with him. His impact on the world was profound, and could not be gotten rid of so easily. His bloody purges were burned into the memory of those who survived them, and the backbreaking work inside the gulags, as well as in the farms and factories, would have made a significant mark on the mentality of Soviet workers.

The atmosphere of distrust and suspicion Stalin had created within Soviet politics continued right up until the very end of the 20th century, when the state he had helped to build collapsed in on itself. Yet even so, in some places, the Man of Steel continues to be admired - particularly in Georgia, where a significant portion of the population still regard Stalin as their country's most famous son.



Stalin, Svetlana, and Vasily in 1935

STALIN'S FAMILY

The lives in the shadow of the Red Tyrant

WORDS: SAM BAVIN

On the evening of 8 November 1932, a frigid Moscow was in jubilant spirits. The lords and ladies of Bolshevism were gathering across from the Kremlin in the apartment of Defence Commissar Kliment Voroshilov to celebrate the 15th anniversary of the October Revolution. The party was raucous. Food flowed constantly out of the Kremlin kitchens and was carried up to Voroshilov's flat on covered metal platters. Vodka and Georgian wine were plentiful, and toasts came one after another. Elsewhere in the Soviet Union, 10 million people were starving as agriculture was being ruthlessly collectivised.

Nadezhda 'Nadya' Alliluyeva, wife of the general secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Joseph Stalin, had dressed up. Ordinarily she was a picture of Bolshevik modesty, but tonight she wore a stylish black dress imported from Berlin. A scarlet rose was placed in her black hair, too. Stalin ignored her, lavishing his boorish flirtations instead on the beautiful actress and wife of a Red Army commander Galya Yegorova. Nadya was driven mad with jealousy. She suffered from severe mental illness and was prone to crippling depression, debilitating headaches and a mania that often manifested itself in jealousy. There is strong evidence to suggest that Stalin had several extramarital dalliances. He was a man of great power. Women surrounded him constantly. Nadya, at the very least, must have strongly suspected him of having affairs.

On this occasion she challenged him. Supposedly Nadya refused to raise her glass to one of Stalin's toasts - a defiance he could not have missed. When he challenged her for not drinking, she ignored him. The Soviet dictator then began to flick cigarettes at his wife to catch her attention, a gesture that, understandably, outraged her. Accounts vary about what happened next. Some suggest Stalin threw another cigarette, lit this time, and that it went down Nadya's new dress, others that he began to bait her verbally. Whatever the true circumstances, Nadya rose, threw a few choice words in her husband's face and stormed out.

She returned home to the austere apartment she shared with the Soviet leader. They had separate bedrooms. She sat down on the bed in her room, coming across another gift that her brother Pavel, along with the dress that she was wearing, had brought with him from Berlin: a Mauser pistol.

In the early hours of the morning on 9 November 1932, she shot herself through the chest. Nadya's death, announced officially as having been caused by appendicitis, rocked Stalin. At her funeral he wept openly as he approached the coffin and kissed her tenderly on the head. As the coffin was born away, though, he was heard muttering bitterly: "She left me as an enemy."

The couple had met when Nadya was only an infant, as Stalin was a regular visitor to the apartment of her parents, the older, educated Bolsheviks Sergei and Olga Alliluyev. When holidaying with the family in the Crimea, Stalin once saved Nadya and her sister Zhenya from drowning in the Black Sea. How could the young child not have admired her heroic saviour? When Stalin returned from his final Siberian exile to stay once again in the Alliluyev apartment in Moscow in 1917, he delighted a now 16-year-old Nadya and her sister with tales of hunting in the frozen wastes and daring escapes. Admiration turned to idolatry.

After the Revolution, when Stalin became People's Commissar of Nationalities, Nadya became his personal assistant. It was around this time that they became lovers. Nadya would then accompany Stalin to Tsaritsyn in an armoured train during the Civil War where Stalin displayed, to the delight of Lenin, his ruthlessness and a lack of regard for human life that would become his trademark - no man, no problem. The couple returned to Moscow in 1919 and married that same year.

Their relationship was tempestuous. Nadya had grown up in an unstable household full of the comings and goings of revolutionaries and her mother was frequently having affairs. She was scrupulous and strict in the domestic sphere. Stalin, the perpetual nomadic revolutionary and a Georgian, no matter how much he tried to suppress it, would have been attracted to such traits in a woman. She was someone who could look after him. Nadya, though, was not suited to the role of the good little housewife. She, like Stalin, was hot-headed, thin-skinned and capable of great cruelty. She was not afraid to challenge her husband.

Explosive rows between the two were common - in 1926 she threatened to leave the Soviet leader, taking the couple's children with her to Leningrad. They bullied one another mercilessly, even in public. Though where he was strong and unyielding, and could shrug off such exchanges, she was mentally unstable and prone to sink into depression. This would impact her physical health in the form of blinding headaches and serious abdominal pains. For the most part when she suffered, Stalin remained detached and distant, incapable of providing positive emotional nourishment. He isolated her and it only served to compound her suffering. Was he to blame for Nadya's suicide, then?

> **"STALIN REMAINED DETACHED AND DISTANT, INCAPABLE OF PROVIDING POSITIVE EMOTIONAL NOURISHMENT"**

LIFE, LOVE AND DEATH IN THE FAMILY OF STALIN

18 DECEMBER 1878
Birth of Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili - later Joseph Stalin - to Vissarion 'Beso' Dzhugashvili and Ekaterina 'Keke' Geladze in the small town of Gori, Georgia.

29 JULY 1906
In the early hours of the morning, Stalin, known to his friends at the time as 'Soso', marries Ekaterina 'Kato' Svanidze, a seamstress, in Tiflis (now Tbilisi), Georgia.

MARCH 1907
Birth of Yakov Djugashvilli to Stalin and Kato in Tiflis. Stalin was delighted when the boy was born, nicknaming him 'Patsana' (laddie).

5 DECEMBER 1907
Death of Kato Svanidze from typhus and dysentery. Yakov is left to be raised by the family of his mother, while Stalin goes back to the revolutionary life in Baku, Georgia.

Stalin cuddles Svetlana at Zubalovo, 1937

"IT WAS A LAWLESS PLACE, THE HEAT WAS STIFLING AND VAST STRETCHES OF LAND HAD BEEN TURNED INTO AN INDUSTRIAL, POLLUTED HELLSCAPE"

Ekaterina 'Kato' Svanidze, Stalin's first wife

His bullying, neglect and detachment towards his wife certainly cannot be overlooked, but it is likely the coalescence of many things that drove Nadya to commit suicide. Nadya's daughter by Stalin, Svetlana, wrote that her mother was suffering from "devastating disillusionment" at this time. She was studying at the Industrial Academy in Moscow and could not have avoided talk from her fellow students of the disasters of collectivisation - the orchestrated famine, the misery in which the peasants were dying, and the cannibalism. Nadya confronted her husband, who rebuked her for lacking political discipline. He felt nothing for those whose suffering he had orchestrated, but Nadya evidently did. Svetlana suggested that perhaps her mother had begun to see that her father "was not the New Man she had thought when she was young". Nadya had also suffered another severe depressive episode, and her headaches only hours before the 15th anniversary celebrations were

SOME TIME IN 1911
Birth of Konstantin, Stalin's illegitimate son, to Maria Kuzakova, in Solvychegodsk, Russia, where Stalin was exiled between 1909-1911.

SOME TIME IN 1917
Birth of Alexander, Stalin's second illegitimate child to Lidia Pereprygia - whom Stalin had seduced when she was only 13 in 1914 - in Kureika, Siberia.

1919
Marriage of Joseph Stalin and the Nadezhda 'Nadya' Alliluyeva. Stalin had previously had an affair with his new bride's mother. He was a 40-year-old widower, Nadya was still a teenager.

21 MARCH 1921
Birth of Vasily to Joseph Stalin and Nadya Alliluyeva. Nadya walked to the hospital as she went into labour.

SECRET SONS

Stalin's illegitimate children in exile

Exiles were seen as badges of honour for young Marxist revolutionaries in Tsarist Russia. Stalin spent a significant portion of his life between 1902 and 1917 in exile, fathering two illegitimate children during that time.

Between 1909 and 1911, he was banished to the tiny, frozen village of Solvychegodsk, 1,000 kilometres northeast of Moscow. The future Soviet dictator passed the time conducting a string of affairs. The last of these dalliances was with his landlady Maria Kuzakova - a widower and already a mother of three children. By the end of June 1911, Stalin had disappeared and Maria was pregnant with a fourth child. The baby, Konstantin, was born later that year.

During another exile in Siberia, Stalin seduced a 13-year-old orphan named Lidia Pereprygia (making him a statutory rapist by Tsarist law). She gave birth to a baby in late 1914, which died soon after, and another child, Alexander, in 1917. Stalin was already gone.

Neither Konstantin nor Alexander were ever officially acknowledged by their father. Years later, though, Konstantin was brought to Moscow under clandestine circumstances and protected.

Stalin's log cabin in Solvychegodsk

Vasily Stalin, the tyrant in miniature, 1942

unbearable. Then there was Stalin's behaviour at the party itself.

Ultimately, Nadya, as the wife of Stalin, was doomed. He was an entirely political creature - the cause came before anything else. Even family. Stalin the Red Titan and Stalin the husband and father were not divisible. If there was any of the personal left in him by the early 1930s, it died with Nadya. Her death also left him twice a widower.

Stalin's first wife, Ekaterina 'Kato' Svanidze, died even younger than Nadya, at 22, and again his neglect played a crucial role in her death. However, they had married for love. Kato, a pretty dressmaker several social strata above Stalin, fell for the dashing young revolutionary with the quiffed hair and feline eyes flecked with gold - known to all at the time as 'Soso'. The young Stalin, often on the run from the police, would sneak into Kato's room in the salon where she worked to visit her at night, à la Romeo and Juliet. Stalin was tender with Kato, though she too felt the lash of his cruelty. She understood and accepted that Stalin had a temper and that he was more devoted to Marxism than to her, and she would pay dearly for it.

Soon after their marriage - an intimate affair conducted by candlelight in the early hours of the morning - Stalin would take Kato and their infant son with him to Baku, now in Azerbaijan. It was the oil boom town of the Caucasus where Stalin was raising hell: setting fire to refineries, kidnapping oil barons and running extortion rackets to fill the party coffers.

Baku was no place for a young, nursing mother. It was a lawless place, the heat was stifling and vast stretches of land had been turned into an industrial, polluted hellscape by the numerous oil fountains belching acrid smoke. Stalin was never home. Kato, almost always alone and hundreds of kilometres away from her family, was left to raise the baby alone. She quickly fell ill but Stalin continued to neglect her, and her condition worsened. When her family implored her to return home to rest and recover she refused, saying she could not leave her husband, whom she worried about terribly. Only when it was too late did Stalin escort her on the punishing 500-kilometre journey back to Tiflis (now Tbilisi), where she died, suffering from typhus, in a miserable state.

Her funeral was like a scene from a melodrama. A devastated Stalin threw himself, weeping, onto the coffin as it was lowered into the earth, before being forced to flee the ceremony over a back fence as it was raided by the Okhrana, the tsar's secret police. After the ceremony, Stalin remarked to a friend that all warm feelings he had towards human beings had died with Kato. He used her death as an excuse to harden himself (as he would later do again with Nadya's - "she left me as an enemy"), to justify becoming the 'man of steel' long before he would officially take on the moniker.

1921

Yakov is brought to Moscow to live with his father, stepmother and younger brother. A shy boy who could not speak Russian, he disgusted his father.

28 FEBRUARY 1926

Birth of Svetlana Alliluyeva to Joseph Stalin and Nadya Alliluyeva. Unlike the sons, Stalin doted on his daughter - she complained about the smell of tobacco and the feel of his bristly moustache.

1929

Yakov attempts suicide. A cry for help, the bullet only grazes his chest as he tries to shoot himself. Stalin scoffs: "The fool! He couldn't even shoot straight!"

9 NOVEMBER 1932

Death of Nadya Alliluyeva, suicide, as the Soviet Union celebrated the 15th anniversary of the October Revolution. Stalin: "She left me as an enemy."

Kato was survived by her son, Yakov, and Nadya by her son Vasily and daughter Svetlana. The lives of all three children were crushed under the weight of their father but Yakov's tale is the most poignant. Abandoned by his father immediately after his mother's death, he was raised by his mother's family in Tiflis. In 1921, aged 25, he moved to Moscow to live with his father. He was a shy, sensitive boy, and could not speak Russian, all traits that disgusted his father, and his physical features were unmistakably Georgian, which disgusted his father even more - for while Joseph Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili was a Georgian, Joseph Stalin was Russian. In 1929, Yakov attempted suicide. He tried to shoot himself (a grim foreshadowing of Nadya's death), but the bullet only grazed him. "The fool, he couldn't even shoot straight," was Stalin's singular glacial response.

Yakov would later join the Red Army as an artilleryman, and soon after the German invasion of the Soviet Union in 1941 he was captured in an encirclement in Vitebsk. The Germans announced to the world that the Soviet leader's son was their captive. Stalin once again raged about Yakov's inability to commit suicide. He saw his son as weak and was sure that he would betray the Soviet Union. Stalin immediately imprisoned Yakov's second wife, Julia, effectively orphaning his own granddaughter Gulia.

> **"HE OVERCOMPENSATED FOR HIS ABSENCE AND AS SHE GREW OLDER SHE FOUND HIS SMOTHERING AFFECTION CLOYING"**

Bounced around prisoner of war and concentration camps, Yakov remained strong and true to his father and his nation, refusing to cooperate with the Germans at every turn despite all of their intimidations. He eventually found himself in Sachsenhausen concentration camp, north of Berlin. After their defeat at Stalingrad in early 1943, the Germans approached Stalin, via intermediaries, offering a trade: Yakov for the disgraced head of the German Sixth Army. Stalin's response was that he would not swap a field marshall for a lieutenant. Yakov was shot dead by an SS guard in Sachsenhausen in April 1943. Stalin would not learn of his son's death, and heroism, until years later.

Like Yakov, Vasily, Stalin's first child by Nadya, could not live up to the lofty expectations of his father. Already a weak and unstable child, Nadya's suicide, when Vasily was just 12 years old, pulled the rug out from underneath him utterly. To make matters worse, Stalin then absented himself from the boy's life completely, leaving him to be raised by secret policemen and bodyguards - chief among them Stalin's personal protector, Nikolai Vlasik, as close to a father figure as Vasily would ever know. Vasily was raised henceforth in an emotionally arid, macho environment by men who were little more than upjumped thugs. Unsurprisingly he became a petulant little thug himself - the tyrant in miniature. He was uncontrollable in school and tortured his younger sister, Svetlana, with vulgar tales about sex.

As Vasily entered adulthood he became a raging alcoholic, an expert in debauchery and, in a continued effort to win his father's praise and recognition, a fighter pilot. Having been removed from active combat missions after Yakov's capture, however, he spent the majority of the war conducting orgiastic parties at the family's Zubalovo dacha. Once, to show off to a potential conquest, he tried to fly her, blind drunk, from the Zubalovo to the Kuibyshev dacha. They had to crash land near a collective farm after the wings of the plane froze - Vasily had already drunk the de-icing spirit.

After the war, Vasily was living under the axe in more ways than one. He was seriously ill because of his drinking, and after Stalin's death on 5 March 1953 he was a political liability with a dangerous name that no longer offered protection. Mere weeks later he found himself imprisoned, serving nearly seven years until his release in January 1960. He died two years later, due to complications arising from his alcoholism, just shy of his 41st birthday. He was survived by a total of four wives - surely a testament to his womanising.

While the sons were starved of both affection and approval, love flowed freely between Stalin and Svetlana, the youngest of his children and his only daughter. The freckled, redheaded girl used to complain that Stalin's bristly moustache tickled her when he held her, and she would give orders to her father and his magnates (followed dutifully - a wonderful image) when she visited him in the Kremlin. On family holidays, Stalin would let his infant daughter lick wine from his fingertips, a Georgian tradition that infuriated Nadya.

Svetlana's relationship with her mother was more distanced. By her own admission Svetlana received

Yakov in 1941, shortly before his capture

Kato's funeral in 1907, with Stalin standing on the far right

Svetlana arrives in the United States in 1967

16 JULY 1941

Yakov Dzhugashvili captured in a German encirclement at Vitebsk. Berlin announces that the son of Stalin is among the prisoners. Stalin rages for a second time: "He couldn't even shoot himself!"

14 APRIL 1943

Death of Yakov Dzhugashvili, shot dead in Sachsenhausen concentration camp, Oranienburg, Germany, after challenging an SS guard. Stalin: "He died a man... Fate treated him unjustly."

5 MARCH 1953

Death of Joseph Stalin due to complications following a massive stroke at the Kuntsevo dacha. The Soviet Union mourns.

Yakov in German captivity, awaiting interrogation

very little physical affection from her disciplinarian mother, and viewed her as a saint-like figure - much in the way that Vasily viewed their father. When Nadya died, Svetlana, still young and unable to grasp the permanency of her mother's absence, was effectively raised by her nanny Alexandra Bychkova. When Stalin did see Svetlana he overcompensated for his absence and as she grew older she found his smothering affection cloying. In her stubbornness and wilfulness, she began to closely resemble her father.

The complete collapse of their relationship finally came in 1943 when Stalin discovered - via his secret police chief Lavrentiy Beria and wiretaps (all of Stalin's children were monitored) - that a 16-year-old Svetlana was having an affair with a married Jewish screenwriter named Alexei Kapler. He squashed the relationship immediately, dispatching Kapler to the gulag for five years under the pretence of espionage. When he confronted his daughter, Stalin could barely contain his fury. Svetlana protested that she loved Kapler and Stalin exploded, striking her twice across the face.

Their relationship remained cold until Stalin's death, after which Svetlana, having endured two loveless marriages, was set adrift. She defected to the United States in 1967, openly rejecting her father's politics. Having made a fortune from her memoirs, she then lost it all, and between 1992 and 2009 she lived in sheltered housing in Bristol, England, before returning once more to the United States. She died alone as a result of colon cancer in the middle of nowhere in the American Midwest, unable to escape her father's name right up until her last breath.

All those close to the man were frozen in the shadow of that name. In reality, though, there was no man. He had ceased to exist. As Stalin, disciplining the child Vasily for trying to exploit the family name, raged himself: "You're not Stalin, I'm not Stalin. Stalin is Soviet power."

When Joseph Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili became Joseph Stalin, he became incapable of sustaining relationships and nurturing loved ones. The cause demanded such. This entirely political creature, born with nothing, clawed its way out of obscurity, stalked revolutionary Russia and fought a bloody war of succession to rule the largest country on the planet under his bootheel for the best part of three decades, murdering millions in the process. Such an animal could not be domesticated, and thus to be part of Stalin's family was to know neglect, loneliness and cruelty. In short: to be one of his victims too.

Nadya and a baby Svetlana in 1927

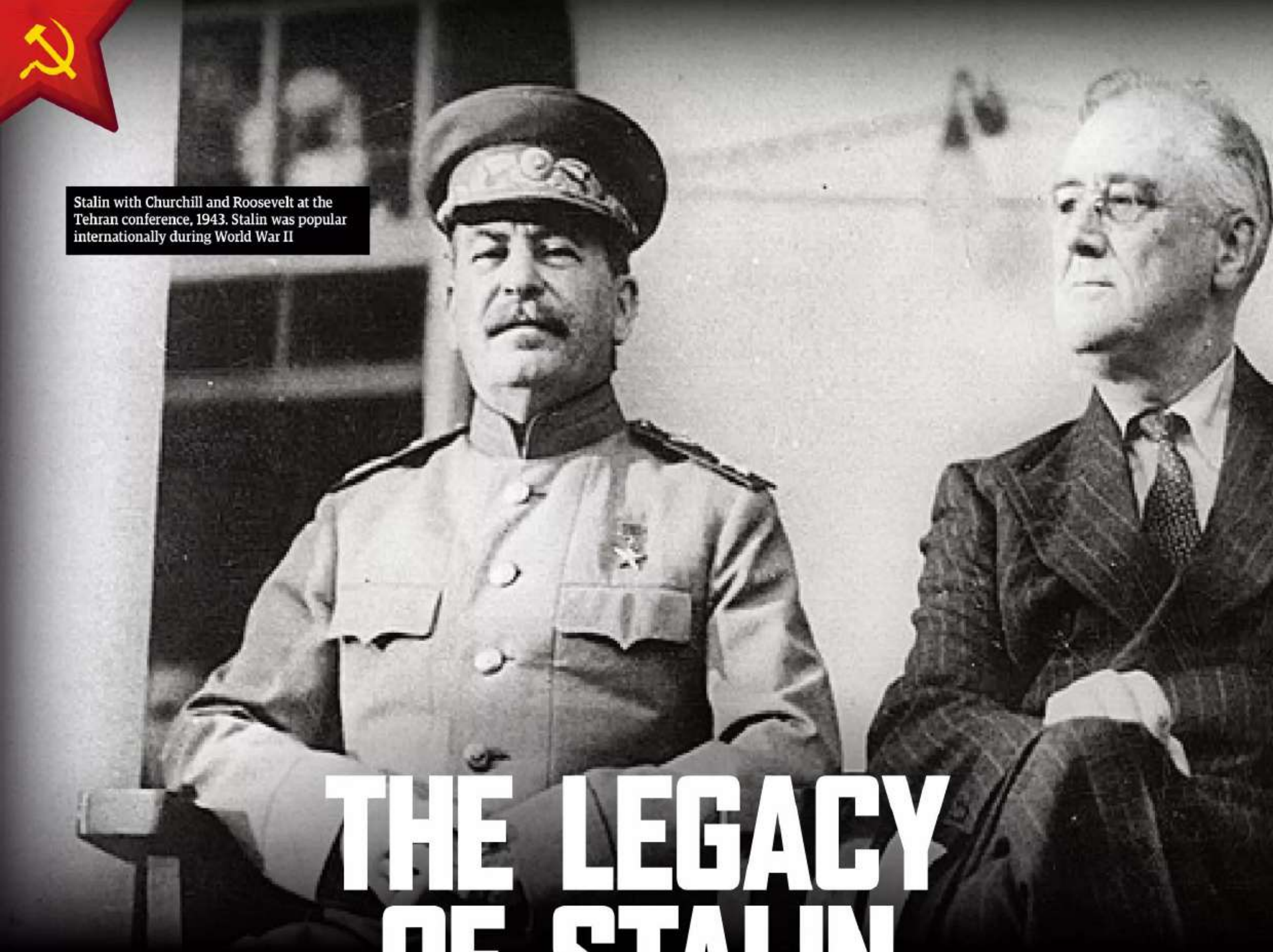
28 APRIL 1953
Vasily Stalin arrested on charges of denigrating leaders of the Soviet Union, anti-Soviet propaganda and criminal negligence. He serves nearly seven years in a special penitentiary before his release in January 1960.

19 MARCH 1962
Death of Vasily Stalin due to complications arising from chronic alcoholism, just short of his 41st birthday. He was survived by four wives.

6 MARCH 1967
Svetlana Alliluyeva submits her desire to defect to the United States in writing to the US Embassy in New Dehli, India. She arrives in New York via Rome and Geneva in April.

22 NOVEMBER 2011
Death of Svetlana Alliluyeva due to complications arising from colon cancer at Richland Center, Wisconsin.

© Getty



Stalin with Churchill and Roosevelt at the Tehran conference, 1943. Stalin was popular internationally during World War II

THE LEGACY OF STALIN

The cultural memory of Stalin as a revolutionary hero and a war leader competes with that of cruel tyrant and mass murderer. His legacy is complex

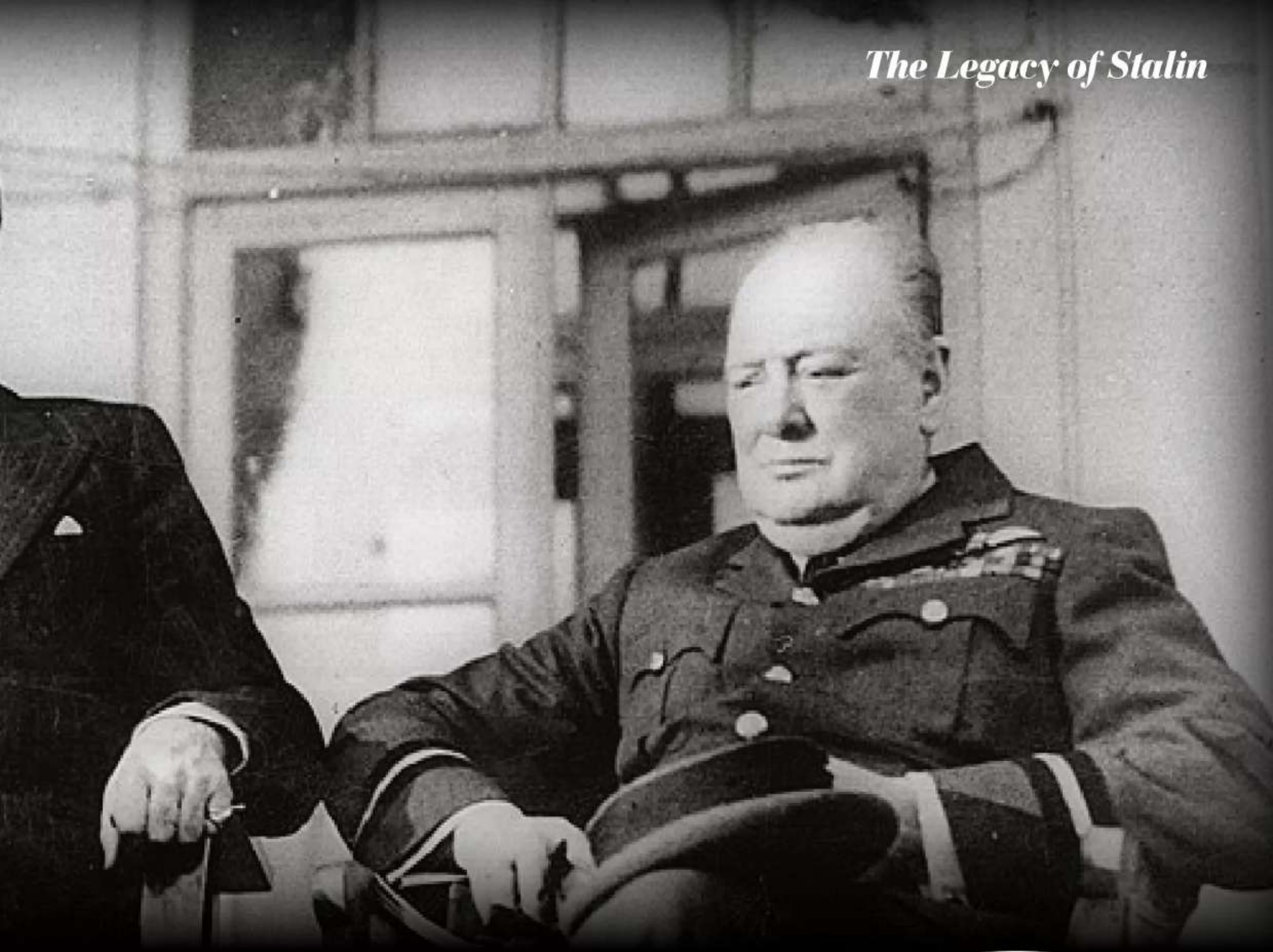
WORDS: MARTYN CONTERIO

In the post-war period, Joseph Stalin's health deteriorated steadily. Official portraits and photos were always inclined to heavily romanticise his looks, airbrushing small pox marks left from childhood, darkening his hair to remove strands of grey and exaggerating his posture, making him look even more the embodiment of the macho man image he'd cultivated since he was a youngster, when he attempted - and repeatedly failed - to lead ruffian street gangs in his hometown. When President Harry S. Truman met him at the 1945 Potsdam Conference, he was surprised to discover Stalin's short stature. Unlike his predecessor Roosevelt, the newly appointed American Commander-in-Chief took an instant dislike to the Georgian and privately disparaged the Vozhd (leader) of the proletariat as a "squirt".

After the Great Patriotic War victory and into the early 1950s, Stalin's public appearances and major speeches became fewer and fewer. The war had taken more of a physical toil on the despot than he or anybody else in the Politburo dared admit (talk of succession was never broached for fear the leader would take it as a coup attempt). Heart trouble and his workaholic lifestyle caught up with him as he entered old age. Yet when Dr. Vinogradov, attending Stalin in 1952, suggested the old man retire on health grounds, he subsequently received a midnight knock on the door from the secret police.

Stalin did not grow old gracefully. He became ever more paranoid and capricious, spending greater and greater lengths of time away from Moscow, usually at one of his dachas by the Black Sea. Of course, the distance did not loosen his vice-like grip on the party-political machinery that had driven his country from political chaos to industrial global superpower via the establishment of a one-party state. At 74, the dictator was ailing, his inherent distrust of medical professions led him to largely self-medicate with pills and tonics. Like the unfortunate Vinogradov, who spoke out of turn during a routine check-up, many of Stalin's former doctors were rotting in Lubyanka prison or lost in the Gulag.

In mid-February 1953, Stalin relocated to his dacha in the Kuntsevo district on the outskirts of western Moscow. The green-walled retreat was manned by hundreds of special troops and anti-aircraft guns positioned at strategic points. All business was conducted over the telephone or with special messengers making the 14-mile round trip to the Kremlin. On 28th February,



Stalin spent the evening dining with his inner circle of goons - Lavrentiy Beria, Georgy Malenkov, Nikolai Bulganin and Nikita Khrushchev - where they watched a cowboy movie and their leader got them drunk (his favourite method of interrogation, because drunken lips are loose lips). At 3a.m., the men left the dacha and Stalin retired to his bedroom.

Stalin was a night owl. He slept during most of the day, waking in the late afternoon and then working way past the witching hour until dawn's first creeping light. On Sunday 1st March, however, there was no sign of the boss. Soldiers and underlings were growing antsy as the day grew long, but they were fearful, too. Disturbing Stalin was strictly verboten, so they left it until as late as possible before enquiring at his door. According to some stories, a brave soul - the dacha's deputy commissioner, Pavel Lozgachev - was selected to knock and deliver a package. Upon entering, he found his leader on the floor, covered in his own urine. Panic set in. Stalin's staff never acted without his direct authority, so they froze. Beria and Malenkov were eventually informed and turned up to see Stalin two hours after first receiving word. Their dillydallying might have been a mixture of profound shock and sneaky opportunity (leave him long enough and he'll die). They stood over Stalin, discussing what to do.

A doctor finally arrived on 2nd March, but the imperator's situation had worsened to the point of no return. Having suffered a stroke, a brain haemorrhage followed, and Stalin coughed blood. His daughter, Svetlana, later described her father's last moments, in a scene that reads like something straight out of an Edgar Allan Poe horror tale. She recounted how he opened his eyes one last time, glanced at the coterie surrounding his bedside, gave a menacing look to all, then raised his left hand as though invoking a curse. At 9:50p.m., on 5th March, Joseph Stalin passed away. On 6th March, it was announced to citizens of the USSR and the world: "The heart of Lenin's comrade-in-arms and the inspired continuer of Lenin's cause, the wise leader and teacher of the Communist Party and the Soviet people, has stopped beating."

On 9th March, a cold, rainy day in Moscow, Stalin's coffin was taken from the House of Soviets to the mausoleum where Lenin's embalmed corpse rested on Red Square. Even in death, Stalin managed to orchestrate one final tragedy over the people he had ruled with terrifying might. As hundreds

President Harry S. Truman took an instant dislike to Stalin of thousands of citizens attempted to catch a glimpse of the funeral cortege, a bottleneck developed. The police were unable to control the crowds and it's estimated up to 500 people were killed in the crush.

Iosif Vissarionovich Dzhugashvili, the son of a humble cobbler turned alcoholic, rose in the world to shape mid-to-late 20th century politics. He changed the map of Europe and oversaw revolutionary fervour and development of communism across the globe, while simultaneously moulding it in his own image, seeing off any rival doctrinaires or deviances from his own bastardisation of Marxist-Leninism, and turned his country into a nuclear power and grand enemy of the United States.

Stalin receives the Sword of Stalingrad from Churchill. The ceremonial weapon was a token of appreciation to Red Army soldiers

CONFRONTING THE WEHRMACHT

Stalin was a force to be reckoned with in World War II and attacked the Nazis with everything Russia had

Hitler launched Operation Barbarossa in June 1941, in a determined bid to subjugate the Slavs, end the 'Judeo-Bolshevist' conspiracy and repopulate lands with Germanic people, as per Hitler's policy of Lebensraum (living space). Hitler's invasion posed a clear existentialist threat to the Marxist-Leninist dream. No country suffered greater casualties in the Second World War than the Soviet Union.

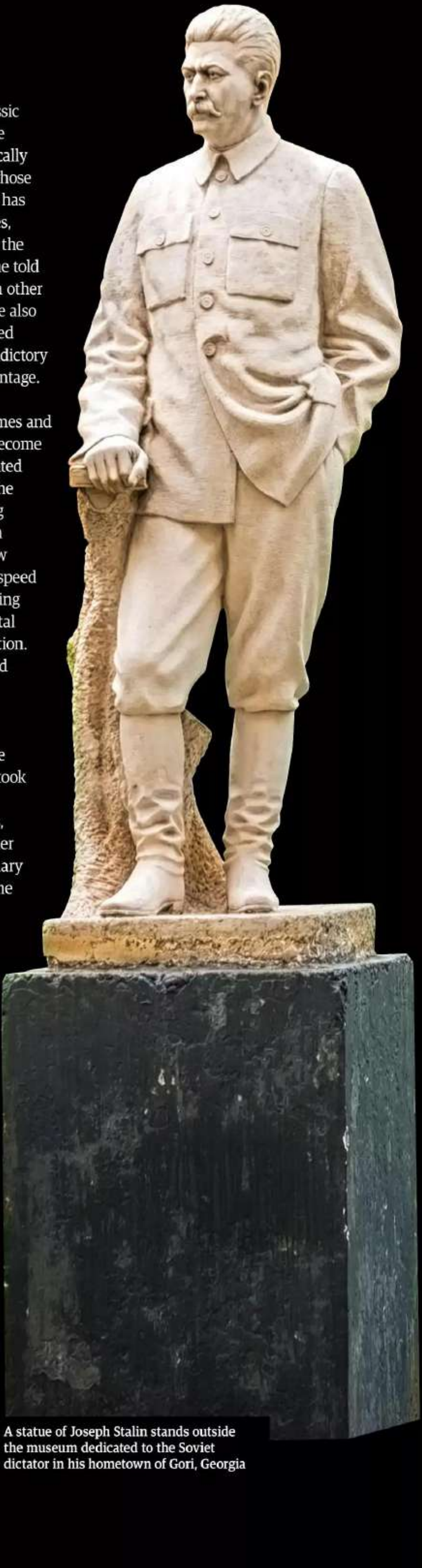
With the Wehrmacht gobbling up territory, terrorising the population and inflicting damage to Soviet prestige, the confrontation at Stalingrad (1942-43) proved a major turning point of the war. The Red Army's victory showed to the world the dreaded Wehrmacht were not as invincible as previously believed.

Stalin's game plan was simple and brutally effective: attack, attack, attack! The armaments industry went into maximum overdrive, producing thousands upon thousands of aircraft and tanks. Patriotic fervour was captured in the wartime slogan 'Everything for the front!' At Stalingrad, Order No. 227 - edited and signed by Stalin, now the Red Army's Supreme Commander - was read out to soldiers. Retreat was a treasonous offence punishable by death on the spot. Stalin was no great tactician on the battlefield, but his fierce drive and unrelenting determination (aided by a sociopathic lack of concern for human life) saw off the Nazi invaders.

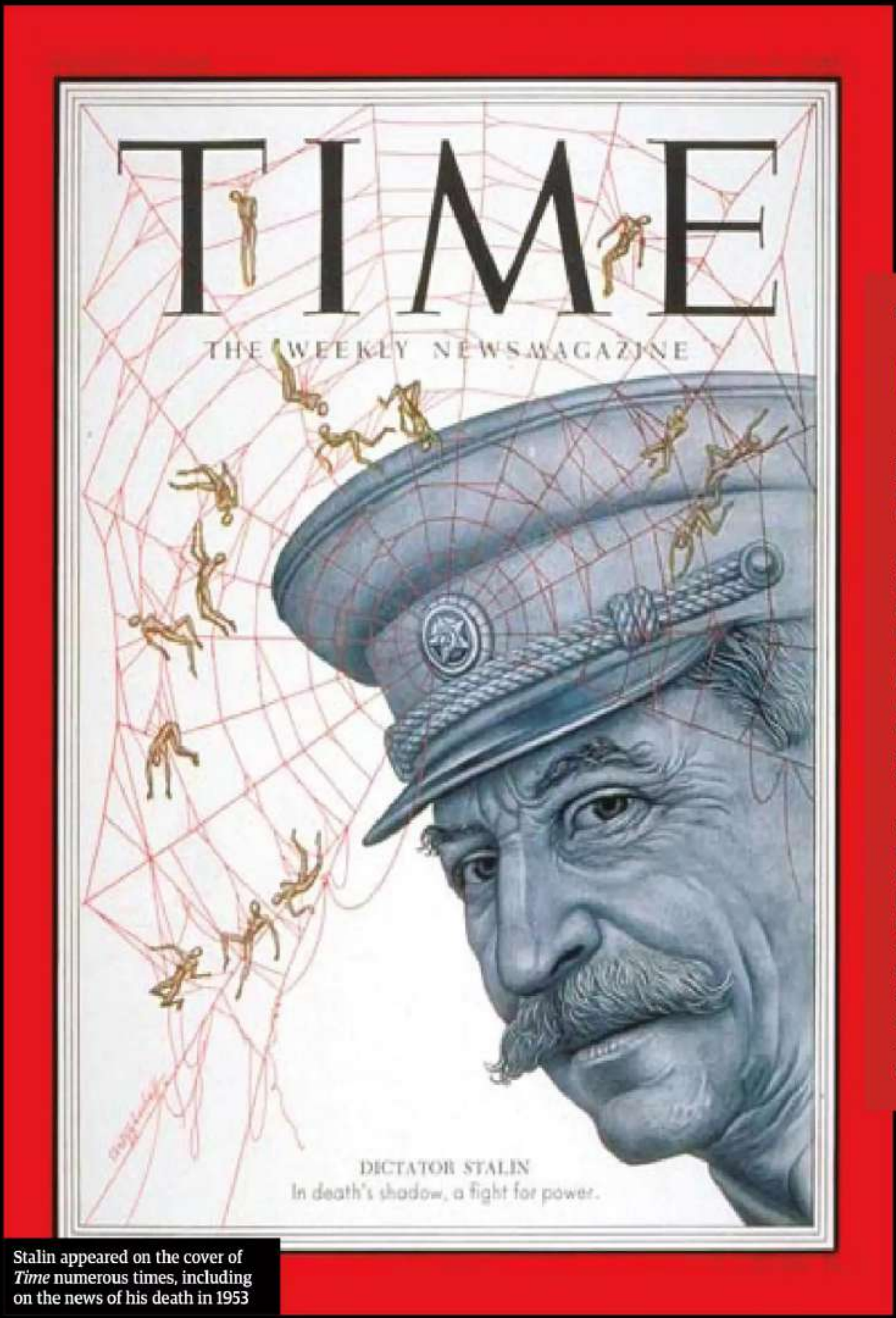
Today in the Putin era (which mimics democratic principles while exhibiting classic Russian autocratic impulses), Stalin's image has become a useful (and sometimes cynically abused) icon of nationalist pride. Putin - whose grandfather once worked as Stalin's cook - has acknowledged the mass-murder and crimes, and has attended ceremonies dedicated to the tyrant's victims... but, on the other hand, he told a gathering of history teachers in 2008: "In other countries even worse things happened." He also approved a school textbook which portrayed Stalin in a positive light. Putin's self-contradictory evasiveness on the topic works to his advantage. 'Stalin was terrible, but...'

Joseph Stalin's achievements are his crimes and his crimes are his achievements. Having become General Secretary of the party and eliminated rivals, by the mid-1930s he had overseen the country's transformation into a burgeoning superpower. The cost of this was the death of millions. He had abandoned Lenin's New Economic Policy - which was designed to speed up the damaged economic structure by using capitalist methods under tight governmental control - with his invention of Collectivisation. This radical centralised development would have monumental impact in very positive and very negative ways, but it rid itself of ideological contradiction: there cannot be socialism in the cities and capitalism in the countryside. From 1936-1938, Stalin undertook the Great Terror - a further liquidation of party members, officer class, NKVD agents, soldiers, intelligentsia, bureaucrats and other governmental officials. Arrested on imaginary charges, many were executed or fed into the Gulag system. What's more, Stalin insisted on getting confessions from entirely innocent people. He then used these false confessions to show the Politburo he had been right all along.

Stalin's reasons for the purge are frighteningly bizarre, but were perhaps spearheaded by a mixture of ideology (replacing older Bolsheviks and party members with fresh-faced sons and daughters of the workers), his psychopathic paranoia and his consuming obsession with Trotsky, who was by that time in exile in Mexico. Although Stalin could easily control the flow of information within his own borders, Trotsky's writings flourished abroad. At the time of the Great Terror instigation, the USSR faced no internal threats, and Stalin had no rivals or plotters in his midst - he'd killed them all. But it was as if he and Trotsky were the last Bolsheviks standing and their beefs went back decades. It was time to finally rid himself of this troublesome former Menshevik.



A statue of Joseph Stalin stands outside the museum dedicated to the Soviet dictator in his hometown of Gori, Georgia



Stalin appeared on the cover of *Time* numerous times, including on the news of his death in 1953

TIME'S MAN OF THE YEAR

Time magazine awarded Stalin their prestigious 'Man of the Year' award twice, securing his wartime, benign-sounding 'Uncle Joe' image

Stalin was awarded *Time* magazine's 'Man of the Year' accolade twice and appeared on the cover 11 times. The first time Russia's leader was awarded the honour, in 1939, was because he represented a new era in global politics and was transforming his country into a powerhouse economy. (It's worth noting that 1938's Man of the Year was Hitler.) Although there were occasional ominous newspaper reports throughout the 1930s hinting at Stalin's true nature and psychopathic inclinations, his popularity in the West during World War II gained him genuine respect and appreciation.

In 1942, Stalin was dubbed 'Man of the Year' again, for the Red Army's battling - and subsequent victories - on the eastern front played a crucial role in the subsequent collapse of Hitler's regime. In terms of public image, too, the Georgian projected a tough guy look Churchill and Roosevelt could never hope to muster. *Time* noted 'Stalin' translated as 'Steel', and this Man of Steel would help secure victory for the Allied Forces. However, when President Roosevelt related American appreciation for Russia's efforts, mentioning they'd coined a nickname for the dictator - the hilariously avuncular 'Uncle Joe' - Stalin (who was notoriously hyper-sensitive) took great offence. The term of endearment did not translate.

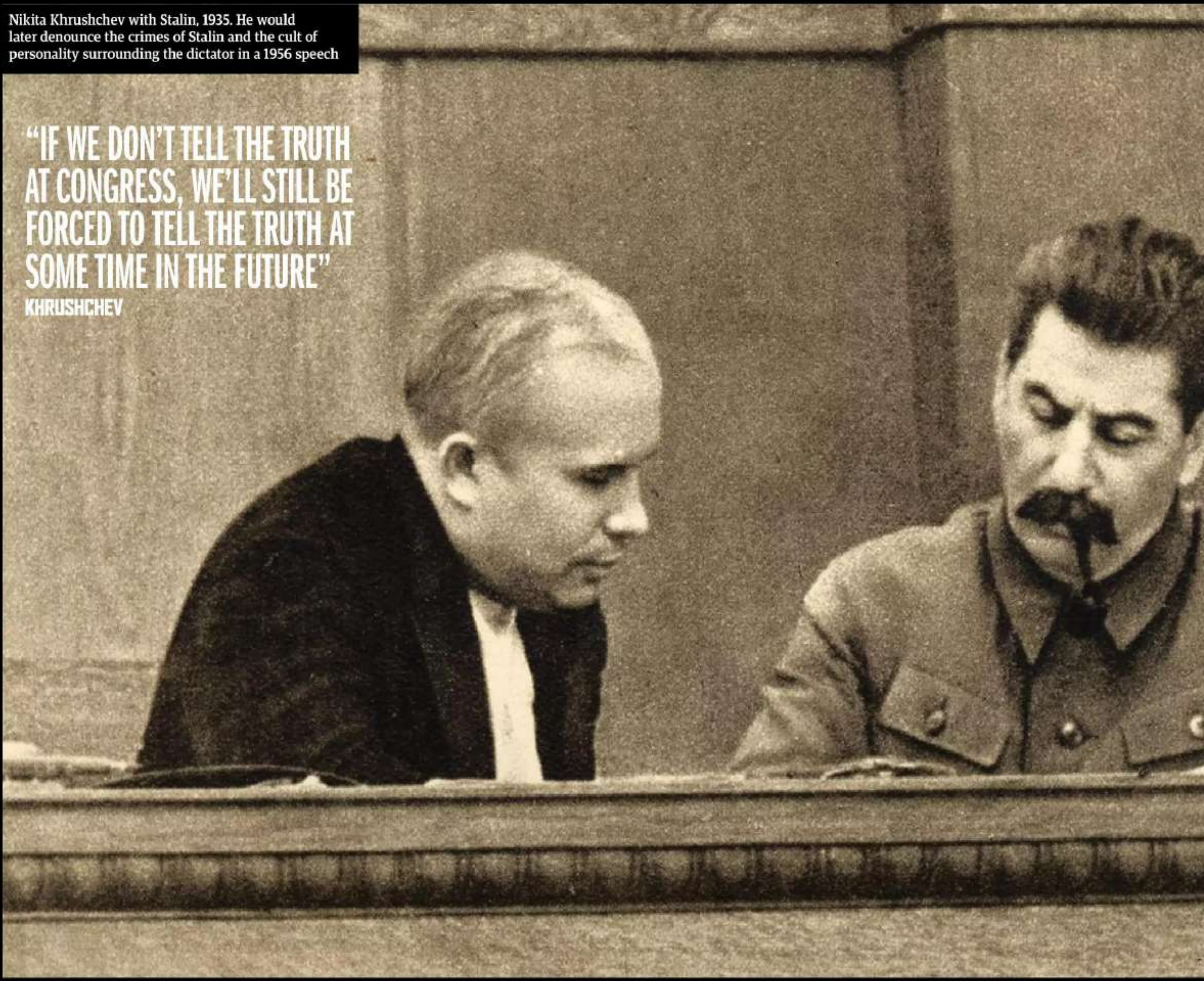
> **"STALIN WAS MORE THAN WILLING TO SACRIFICE HUMAN BEINGS TO REACH REVOLUTIONARY GOALS AND HE SAW A POTENTIAL ENEMY IN THE FACE OF EVERY PERSON HE EVER MET"**

Trotskyists were too few to pose, or mount, a direct takeover, even if the revolutionary was a famous figure within communism, especially in the West. Regardless, Trotsky continued his attacks against Stalin's character in works such as *The Revolution Betrayed* (1937). The Great Terror, too, was a massive psychological assault as much as it was about removing loyal people from their various positions. Is it here, then, that he became a blatant despot? But to Stalin and the Soviet regime, they were ridding the country of unsavoury elements that threatened the communist project and the glorious fate of the working class to achieve socialist utopia.

Historians continually review and discuss the total number of victims who perished due to Stalin's reforms and purges. Stalin was more than willing to sacrifice human beings to reach revolutionary goals, and he saw a potential enemy in the face of every person he ever met. The genocidal aspects and outcomes of his five-year plans is a touchy subject in Russia - cultural ignorance and forgetting form an important role in society, as does cultural remembrance, and this strikes at the heart of the Stalin legacy and debate.

The death of Stalin was not the end of Stalinism, but the birth of what historians tagged neo-Stalinism. There were immediate reforms, rehabilitations and the release of prisoners, and in general the Presidium (the renamed Politburo) proposed innovations to policy and considered that maybe society did not have to be governed quite so brutally. Some policies appeared entirely sensible, such as increasing payments to collective farms to boost production, establishing new light industries and farming lands that were previously untouched. But Stalin's world view and imperial aims for the USSR to maintain military and industrial supremacy was continued.

Another salient problem hung over the Presidium like the proverbial Sword of Damocles - Russia's politicians under Stalin all took various roles in the Great Terror. None of them were innocent, but it became expedient to see themselves as victims of their ex-boss. Therefore, people like Beria had to be removed. For he knew (as former chief of the NKVD) where all the bodies (proverbial and literal) were buried. In June 1953, Lavrentiy Beria was arrested on bogus charges (a classic Stalinist move) and removed from the Presidium during a meeting. After a quick trial by kangaroo court (with no chance of appeal), he was executed by firing squad in December, along with other loyalists. This mini-purge led by Nikita Khrushchev ensured the survival of fellow Presidium members who were gravely concerned



Nikita Khrushchev with Stalin, 1935. He would later denounce the crimes of Stalin and the cult of personality surrounding the dictator in a 1956 speech

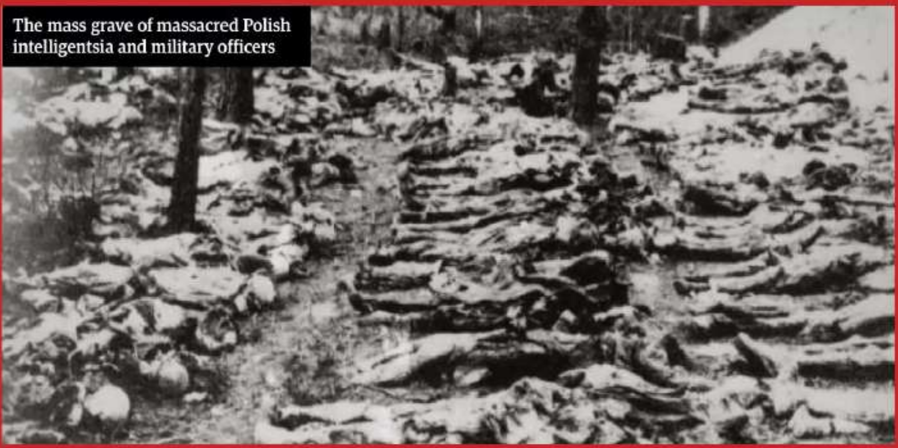
> **"IF WE DON'T TELL THE TRUTH AT CONGRESS, WE'LL STILL BE FORCED TO TELL THE TRUTH AT SOME TIME IN THE FUTURE"**
> **KHRUSHCHEV**

March 1953: Crowds gather outside the House of Soviets building, where Joseph Stalin's body is on display for people to pay their respects.

Beria was plotting against them. Khrushchev, once he gained a foothold of power, ordered outlets such as revolutionary mouthpiece *Pravda* to cool it with the Stalin praise and to stop referencing his years in power. In 1956, however, he positively stunned the 20th Congress of the Communist Party with a direct attack on Stalin in a speech that shook the world. But more on this later.

Khrushchev's denouncement was nothing new. Lenin had fired up warning flares back in 1922, but the signals were repressed. With his health in rapid decline, the revered Bolshevik became increasingly concerned about the man from Gori, who at that time was General Secretary of the Party's Central Committee, as well as working in a wide variety of departments. In the years during the run-up to the revolution, when the uncouth, genuinely working-class Stalin's meteoric rise to the echelons of the party looked as likely as a moon-landing, he served as Lenin's trusty guard dog, and during the Civil War he distinguished himself further. But it wasn't only Lenin who saw in Stalin the potential to become a power-mad despot. Plenty of other party members were increasingly alarmed at how many positions he held. They, too, were concerned about the prospect of him succeeding Lenin. Stalin in this period craved power, but often sulked and demurred when accusations were made that he was gunning for the top job. His favourite tactic was to act outraged at any suggestion of opportunism, demand to be placed on leave, then returned once the party requested he do so. In truth, the party needed him, particularly for his expertise and bureaucratic skills. Stalin knew he was indispensable yet liked to act affronted and aggrieved when people put to him his personal ambition trumped the revolutionary aims.

While Lenin's political testament was suppressed from the wider party and public, Stalin was very much aware of its less-than-glowing contents towards him, having sat through a reading of it in secret meetings, not once, but twice. Abroad, the full text was published in the *New York Times* in 1926. In his testament, Lenin called for Stalin's removal as General Secretary. That was a damning summary in and of itself. But Stalin's ascent to the top seat, which was vacated by his old ally and



The mass grave of massacred Polish intelligentsia and military officers

FOREST OF DEATH: THE KATYN MASSACRE

Stalin ordered the deaths of thousands of Polish military personnel then tried to pin it on the Nazis

West of the city Smolensk is the village of Katyn. Here, and at two other sites in the spring of 1940, an estimated 22,000 Polish military personnel were executed by Stalin's NKVD, upon orders from the dictator and his Politburo. The Soviets had acted upon Hitler's invasion of Poland by embarking on their own excursion into the territory. The Soviets saw an opportunity to purge the officer class and did so by separating them from ordinary POWs. The reasoning for the action appeared to be strategic. With the military intelligentsia gone, the Poles would be easier to control.

Taken into woodlands, officers were led to a pit and shot one after the other through the base of the skull. The mass graves were not discovered until 1943. The crime was covered up for pragmatic reasons – the Allies needed Stalin to help win the war. Not until the 1990s did the Russians admit the truth – the Polish POWs were murdered on Stalin's command at the behest of the NKVD boss, Lavrentiy Beria. The Katyn Massacre victims represent the bestial savagery of the Bolshevik's opportunistic and ideological paranoia and drive to exterminate and control any perceived threat.

"JOSEPH STALIN'S ACHIEVEMENTS ARE HIS CRIMES AND HIS CRIMES ARE HIS ACHIEVEMENTS"

comrade, was unstoppable. After all, they were never friends - Lenin, for all his revolutionary aims, was a class snob.

Khrushchev's later evisceration of the Stalin years would not be suppressed and was intended to damage the deceased leader's legacy. In a closed session of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party on 25th February, 1956, he took to the podium and denounced Stalin under what became known as the 'secret speech' (for the full text wasn't published in the USSR until 1989). Khrushchev's verbal assault against the cult of personality did have ramifications - for example, it saw demonstrations in Poland and an uprising in Hungary. He forcefully attacked his former leader for his early failures during the Second World War (Stalin and the USSR were proverbially caught with their pants down, all intelligence as to Nazi intentions having been dismissed by the leader). Khrushchev went on to attack the purging of military top brass and other party members. He limited his accusations to party-specifics, generally ignoring the general population and rarely touching upon Stalin's pre-1934 acts of aggression to the Communist Party and his rivals. Neither did Khrushchev have much of a problem with Stalin's liquidation of old revolutionaries such as Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev and Bukharin.

Khrushchev the reformist quoted Marx and Engels, reminding Congress that the cult of the individual goes against the spirit of socialism and the communist process of liberating the workers. He quoted Lenin's testament, too: "After taking over the position of General Secretary, comrade Stalin accumulated immeasurable power in his hands and I am not certain whether he will be always able to use this power with the required care." The delegation was shocked at Khrushchev's words, but as he argued: "If we don't tell the truth at Congress, we'll still be forced to tell the truth at some time in the future. And we won't be the people making speeches. No, instead we'll be the people under investigation!"

Khrushchev followed his 1956 assault on Stalin with another in 1961. In this year, too, the body of the dead leader was removed from its hallowed resting place in the Lenin mausoleum and buried near a patch by the Kremlin wall, a modest bust marking the site. He remains there to this day. Despite Khrushchev's efforts to move the country on, Brezhnev - Khrushchev's successor - was more inclined to simply forget about Stalin than to actively carry on the de-Stalinisation process.

The memory of Stalin in the 21st century is a story of repeated attempts at rehabilitation. In 2000, a survey conducted regarding 20th-century Russian history saw the Stalinist era garner a satisfaction rating of 26%. In 1989, it had received a paltry 12% approval. In the same 2000 survey, Nicholas II's time in power received 18%. The Khrushchev and Brezhnev periods received the most support and satisfaction ratings, but 26% is far from an outright denouncement. Stalin's rehabilitation was even more pronounced in 2008. In a television show modelled on the BBC's *Great Britons*, viewers voted Joseph Stalin the third greatest Russian. The top spot was awarded to St. Alexander Nevsky, the medieval leader who saw off the Teutonic invasion of the 13th century. Nevsky's story was told by Sergei Eisenstein's Soviet-era film, said to be one of Stalin's favourites. Stalin appeared throughout *The Name of Russia*'s

"JOSEPH STALIN LEFT NO PERSONAL TESTAMENT OR MEMOIRS. WE JUDGE HIM ALONE ON HIS DEEDS AND ACTIONS. ONE OF THE MOST RUTHLESS AND COLD-HEARTED INDIVIDUALS IN THE HISTORY OF THE WORLD IS ADMIRED BY SOME FOR SUCH DEVIOUS AND CRUEL TRAITS, AS WELL AS HIS VIRULENT ANTI-CAPITALIST BELIEFS"

poll at a consistently high position - despite all we know about him and his crimes in the 21st century. Also included in the list were Lenin, Peter the Great and Ivan the Terrible. In Germany, when they ran a similar contest among the nation to name the greatest German of all time, Hitler was banned outright from inclusion. In Russia, their own 20th-century despotic maniac was deemed a legitimate candidate for inclusion.

In Stalin's hometown of Gori, Georgia, there is a museum dedicated to preserving the life and memory of their most famous son. Founded in the late 1950s, you won't find much here about the purges - instead, the museum looks at his early years as a poet, the daring escapes from Siberian exile (brushing over the fact he got a 14-year-old peasant girl pregnant and she bore him a son) and his exciting escapades plotting bank robberies to fund Bolshevik activities. Yet given the ideological repressions doled out by Lenin and then Stalin - who acted exceedingly harshly against his compatriots, affording them no special favours - the tyrant's popularity is just another strange twist and aspect of an enduring political legacy. For the binary - national hero or monster? - is redundant when the cult surrounding him refuses to die, or they seek to file his political terror campaigns and gross disregard for human life as 'the communistic ends justify the violent means'. It is clear enough, then, that Stalin's very complicated legacy allows for both readings. He is both a national hero and a villain. However troubling that looks to Western eyes - where he is seen through and through as a terrible figure, despite the West's debt to him as an ally during the war - the fact that he brought misery and enslavement to his people has often been overshadowed by other factors. It was 19th-century poet Fyodor Tyutchev who wrote: "Russia cannot be understood with the mind alone." The quote is most apt as a caution and caveat in the temptation to pull Russia closer to European ways of thought and then act mystified when things do not tally.

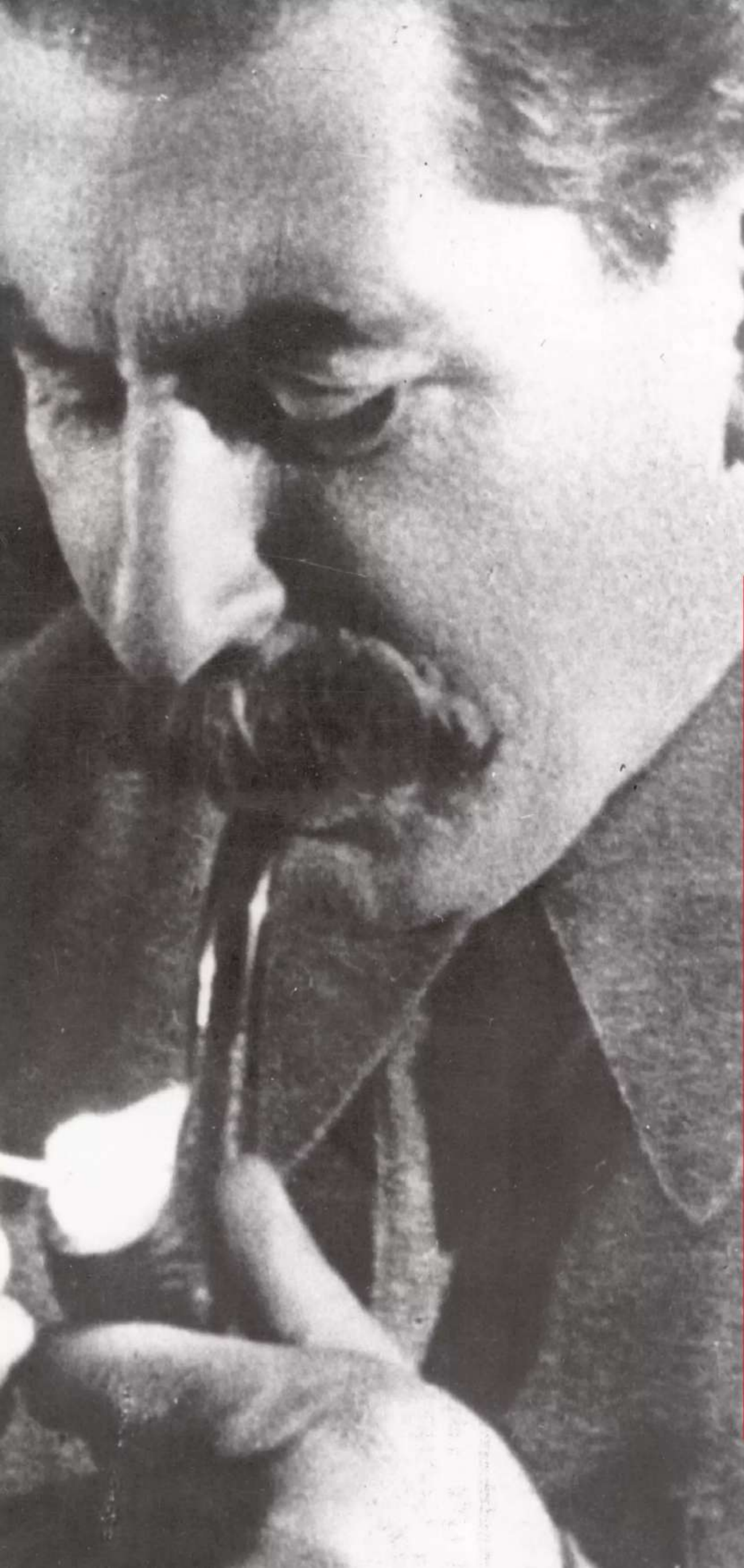
Stalin was on the rise again in this decade, which saw the 100th anniversary of the October Revolution. On the 60th anniversary of his death in 2013, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace put out another survey with peculiar results. While Russians generally agreed Stalin was a mass-murdering tyrant, a whopping 68% of those polled saw his defeat of the Nazis as of greater historical importance. The rehabilitation in recent times has seen pro-Stalinists in the Communist Party attempt to get Volgograd renamed Stalingrad, commenting if it's okay for the Parisian Métro to have a station named after him, why not the city that saw the Red Army's most culturally enduring victory (there have been umpteen films and documentaries about the battle)? The Communist Party secured 100,000 signatures to their appeal, but it did not lead to a name change. Instead, for days leading up to the battle's remembrance, the city reverts to being called Stalingrad.

The cult of personality and hero worship can reveal ugly truths and provoke uncomfortable questions about humanity and attitudes to political actions that have inhuman results. Stalin was never simply free to act how he pleased - specific conditions within the one-party communist system, external features and his own inclinations collided together. He consolidated his power base over the years. Then, as now, state control was of paramount importance and the same principles of rule prop up Putin as they did Stalin.

Joseph Stalin left no personal testament or memoirs. We judge him alone on his deeds and actions. One of the most ruthless and cold-hearted individuals in the history of the world is admired by some for such devious and cruel traits, as well as his virulent anti-capitalist beliefs. Stalin verges on paradox. The brave revolutionary hero, the wartime leader who fought off the Nazis, the man who outright rejected compromise and rebuilt national pride and a failing nation, the pugnacious former seminary student who rose from poverty to become a political giant was also a mass-murderer on a scale that dwarves even the revolting crimes of the Third Reich.

The view from his desk was severely limited. He did not see the results of his actions up close. On the rare occasion when he did, Stalin believed others were responsible for the ills. It was their incompetence, not his decisions or communism at fault. Yet at times, his decisions were impulsive, illogical and damaging. Stalin was never an original thinker or outstanding Marxist theorist, he was a great reactor to events throughout the 1920s, 30s and 40s. World War II left him as the pure embodiment of Russian patriotism (despite the fact he was Georgian and spoke throughout his life with a thick Georgian accent). Millions secretly hated him back then as millions hate him now, but his legacy is a gloriously complicated set of contradictions and it is bound to be debated for decades to come. Through the story of Stalin, we learn a man with a yearning for great power can so easily become a monster, but equally that the monster is just a man.

A moment of calm: Stalin lights his pipe in 1936



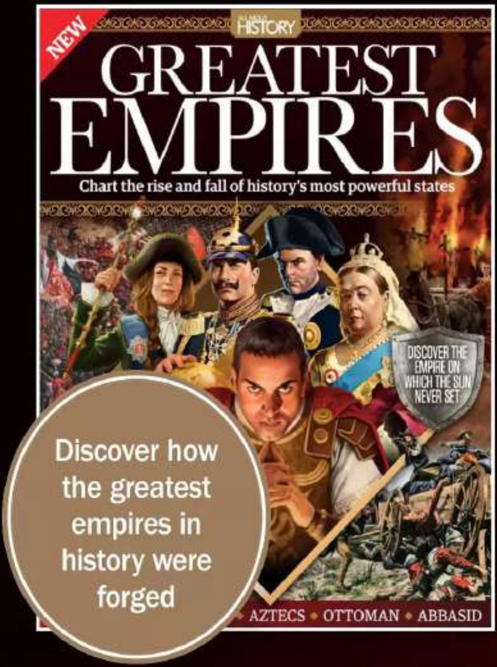
Director Nikita Mikhalkov receiving the Grand Prix award for *Burnt By The Sun* at the Cannes Film Festival in 1994

CINEMA'S RESPONSE TO STALINISM

1994's *Burnt By The Sun* explored the horrific legacy of the Great Terror and won acclaim worldwide

Since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, a handful of films have dealt with the horrors of Stalinism. One of the most famous cinematic responses is 1994's *Burnt By The Sun*, which won the prestigious Grand Prix award at the Cannes Film Festival and the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar. It was hugely popular with Russian audiences, too, as it tapped into the style of Russian melodramas with historical backdrops. Here, though, unburdened by Soviet censorship, Nikita Mikhalkov was able to explore the failures of Bolshevism, openly acknowledge Stalin's crimes against his people and capture the nation's mood of reflection after decades of communist rule.

Set during the Great Terror (1936-1938), Kotov (played by Mikhalkov) is a retired Red Army commander and hero of the Civil War, living peacefully in the countryside with his wife and daughter. One day, an old acquaintance named Mitya arrives on the scene. Mitya is now working as a NKVD agent and Kotov comes to realise he's been marked for arrest. Kotov hopes his former close working relationship with Stalin will save him and his family, but he is gravely mistaken.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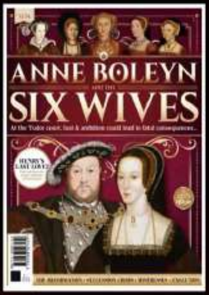
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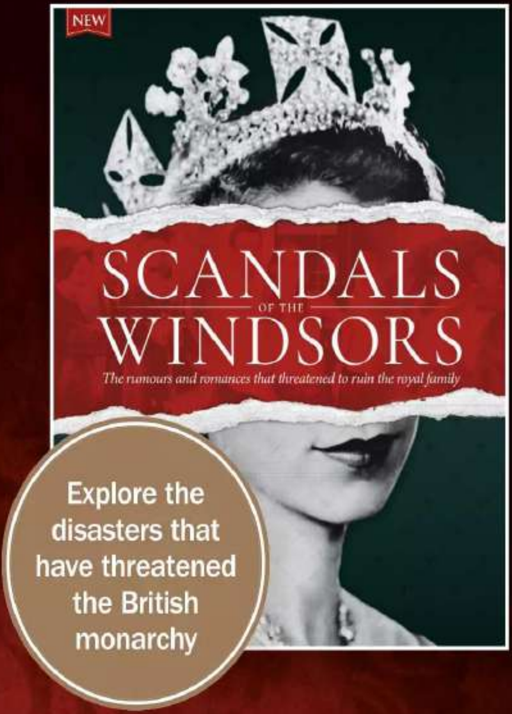
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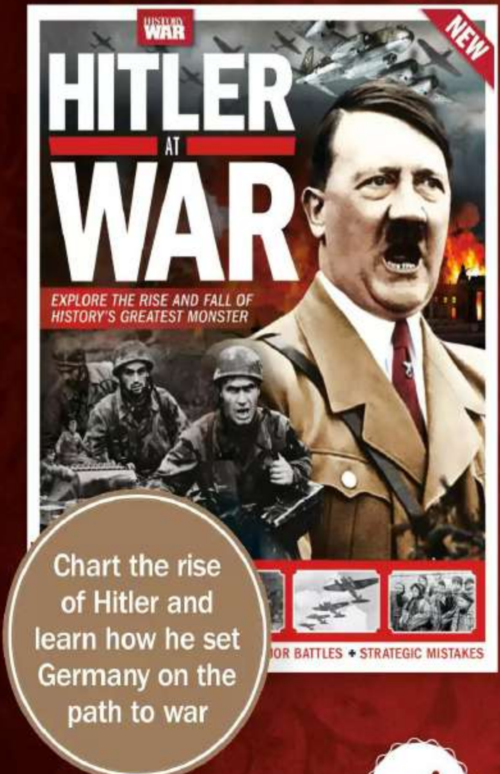
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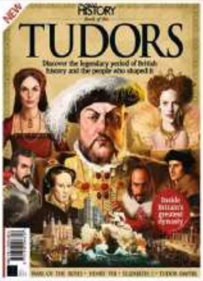

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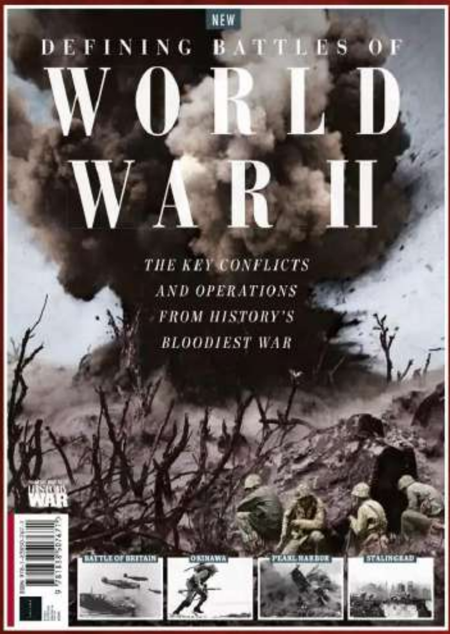
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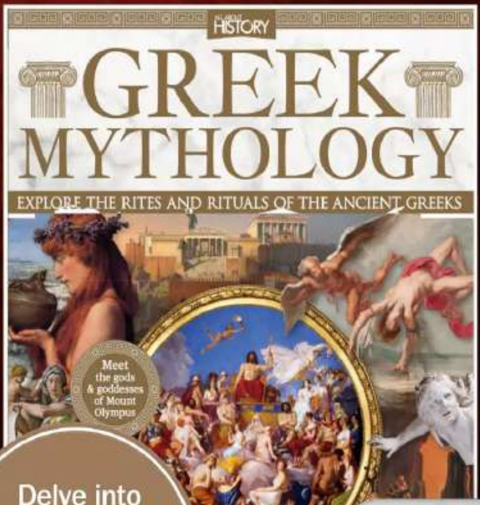
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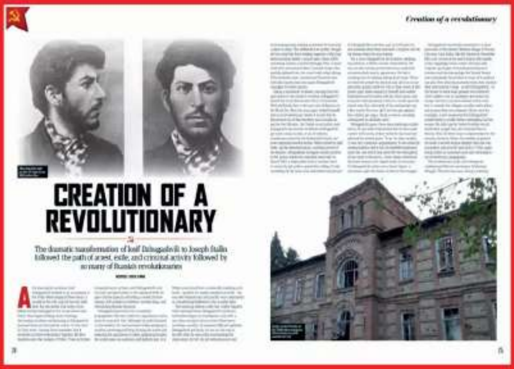

CREATION OF A REVOLUTIONARY

The dramatic transformation of Iosif Dzhugashvili to Joseph Stalin followed the path of arrest, exile, and criminal activity followed by so many of Russia's revolutionaries

MAKING A MONSTER

How the boy destined for a career in the church became a Bolshevik bandit

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